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THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

NOVEMBER 6 1981

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Science under indictment

By Max Perutz

LIEBE F. CAVALIERI:
The Double-Edged Helix
198pp. Columbia University Press.
\$19.50.
0 231 053061

Every profession harbours some embittered individuals who blame their disenchantment on its prostitution by their colleagues. This book is written by such a man, who presents moral imperatives, lofty sentiments, truths, half-truths, distortions and self-contradictions all rolled together into a fanatical polemic: against America's leading molecular biologists; against genetic engineering; against the freedom of science, as well as the alleged regimentation of science by administrators and its exploitation by a new, commercially motivated scientific elite; against the National Academy of Sciences of the USA and its president, who is seen as no more democratic than a czar; against the Pill, the motor car, agrochemicals, food additives, pharmaceuticals, antibiotics, big business and Nobel Prizes. It is for Society and the Environment and for those scientists who share the author's views, though he fails to mention the awkward fact that one of them is also a Nobel Laureate.

The polemic against genetic engineering forms the heart of the book. This subject started in 1973 when scientists found ways of cutting the chromosomes of any organism, including man's, into small fragments, some containing only one or a few genes. The genes can then be incorporated into bacteria or yeast. Growth of these micro-organisms amplifies the genes and allows them to be isolated in chemically pure form. The micro-organisms containing them can be turned into factories to produce substances which they would not normally make, such as human insulin or proteins from which vaccines can be prepared. The discoverers of the new techniques feared that bacteria that live in the human gut could acquire cancer virus genes or be fabricated into virulent new micro-organisms against which we have no defence. These concerns led to the formulation of safety guidelines for genetic manipulation. Experiments were classified according to a rough scale of risks, and precau-

tions recommended accordingly. In the United States compliance was voluntary, though for government-sponsored research non-compliance would have been punished by withdrawal of the grant. In Britain this was true to begin with, but since the passing of the Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974, non-compliance can lead to prosecution.

Because the United States has no Federal law similar to that Act, demands arose there that safety regulations for genetic manipulation should be made statutory. The demands came to a head just when molecular biologists were beginning to regard many of their initial fears as exaggerated and favoured relaxing the guidelines rather than having them codified into law. The scientists therefore resisted and eventually defeated the introduction of such legislation. Cavallieri's book centres on the accusation that this was done by a powerful élite of commercially motivated scientists, who manipulated scientific information and the rest of the scientific community for their own ends, and deceived Congressmen into believing that the potential benefits of genetic engineering outweighed its risks. I do not regard these accusations as justified. In the United States lobbying is part of the normal democratic process. In the debate about genetic engineering both sides had their say but it was the emotional appeals of its opponents rather than the more sober assessments of its supporters that captured the media. If Congress decided not to hamstring the scientists' work by rigid legislation, it did so for good reasons. While it is true that some of the genetic engineers have commercial as well as scientific interests at stake, most of them want to use the techniques for bio-medical research on topics such as the chemical basis of inherited diseases, the mechanism by which cancer viruses infect mammalian cells, or the ways by which we make antibodies that protect us from disease. Cavallieri mentions none of this work. He dis- counts, perhaps rightly, claims that genetic manipulation may lead to a cure for cancer, but he conceals the fact that it has already led to striking progress in discovering how certain viruses induce cancer. A solution of this problem is vitally important: for instance it now looks as though

primary cancer of the cervix of the uterus may be caused by a virus; the most common cancers in the Third World, is now known to be associated with persistent infection with hepatitis B virus. Genetic manipulation has made it possible to dissect the chromosome of the hepatitis virus and to attempt to use certain of its genes for the fabrication of a vaccine, so that this disease might disappear just as polio did. Genetic engineering has also made possible the antenatal diagnosis of certain inherited diseases. Cavallieri dismisses such diseases as too rare to justify the risks involved, but this is incorrect. For instance, in Ferrara and other towns in the Po Valley, two out of every hundred children are born with a crippling anaemia (thalassaemia) whose causes have now been pinpointed by genetic manipulation.

Much of the author's polemic derives from the assumption that all commercial interests are inherently evil. He mentions companies that are trying to manufacture insulin and human growth hormone, and argues that there is no real need for these. It is true that present supplies of insulin made from animal pancreases are sufficient, but there have been shortages when some of the six million American diabetics have become alarmed at the possibility of harmful effects of anti-diabetic pills and taken more insulin instead. If men continue to get older, people will eat more cereals and diabetics will therefore need more insulin. Hence pharmaceutical firms are wise to look for alternative sources of supply. Cavallieri does not mention that companies are also trying to make interferon as a possible anti-viral and anti-cancer drug, nor that they are trying to make vaccines against influenza, food-mouth disease and other illnesses against which remedies or effective and cheap vaccines are not now available.

Molecular biologists no longer regard the manipulations involved in such research as too risky, because they have developed bacteria so engineered as not to be able to survive in the human gut, and because man-made modifications as such tend to reduce the virulence of micro-organisms so that they cannot com-

pete with wild-type strains under natural conditions and therefore die out. The danger of producing a virulent new organism that would persist in nature is therefore regarded as remote, compared to the potential benefits of better defences against known disease-producing bacteria and viruses.

What about the long-term risks of developing methods that might one day be used to engineer deliberate modifications of man's genetic make-up? Cavallieri is not the last popular science writer to conjure up Aldous Huxley's Brave New World. Indeed, if the pronouncements of certain eminent biologists quoted in the book are to be believed, Cavallieri has a good case. For instance, Aldous Huxley's brother Julian predicted the need for "a global evolutionary policy". . . . Eventually, the prospect of radical eugenic improvements could become one of the main springs of man's evolutionary advance. . . .

Joseph Lederberg, a geneticist who now provides over the Rockefeller University in New York, said, "... it would be incredible if we did not soon have the basis of developmental engineering techniques to regulate, for example, the size of the human brain by pre- or early post-natal intervention". I should have thought that phrenology, the science which George Eliot used to admire because it linked people's intelligence simply to the size of their brain, had long since been discredited. J. B. S. Haldane, geneticist and champion of Marxism, suggested that scientists fulfil their social responsibility by cloning out standing individuals (such as geni- cists?). He failed to consider that the benefits of propagating his brilliant intelligence might be outweighed by the risk of propagating his notorious temper. In a clone of identical brethren that combination might have led to wholesale fratricide.

Cavallieri rightly observes that eugenics rests on the untenable assumption of infinite wisdom and prescience on our part, but he might also have quoted Peter Medawar's demonstration that eugenics is scientifically unsound, because the human genetic make-up is too complex for any characters to be bred true. I regard Huxley's and Lederberg's statements as no more than enchi-

rases which might equally well have been issued by a firm of advertising agents, because we have as yet no idea what determines any mental attribute such as intelligence, courage or musical talent. Typically, scientists who want to know how the brain works measure the electrical impulses that issue from a frog's eye when it sees a fly pass, or they try to detect what nerves are excited in a monkey's brain when he sees a bar of light move from left to right. They do not know what determines the development of the brain or of any other organ, nor how the brain works even in the simplest animal, let alone in man. How then are we to acquire "the basis of development engineering techniques" . . . to regulate the size of the human brain? If eminent biologists stopped talking through their hats they would arouse less hostility to their subject.

Cavallieri pleads for the responsible use of science by scientists and technocrats, and complains that no social mechanism has ever been established to ensure the thoughtful, "humanistic" (I suppose he means humane) application of human discoveries. Has he never heard of our National Health Service, which is a splendid example of just such a mechanism? Cavallieri envisages a committee of responsible citizens to consider the results of research and their possible consequences, and recommend appropriate public policies. He cites the motor car as one of the evil results of technology because it kills 40,000 Americans a year. To follow his argument to its logical conclusion, suppose that a hundred years ago Cavallieri's committee had decided that the risks of the internal combustion engine outweighed its benefits and had induced governments world-wide to forbid its further development: would the committee also have foreseen that the introduction of elementary hygiene and sanitation would lead to an enormous increase in the world's population and that these multitudes would not be able to be fed without mechanized agriculture and transport? The assessment of the benefits and risks of technological innovation can be as difficult as those of eugenics.

What of some of Cavallieri's other accusations against science and tech-

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nology? He alleges that "the 1.2 billion dollars spent on cancer research in 1977 represents in a large part a search for some means to patch up the damage caused by environmental factors, including industrial and food additives". In support he quotes a statement by Sir Richard Doll, the medical epidemiologist, that most, if not all, cancers have environmental causes and can therefore in principle be prevented. Doll, however, defines "environmental" as meaning the air we breathe, the food we eat and the things we come into daily contact with, but without implying that those factors that cause cancer are necessarily man-made - a distinction that the author has failed to grasp. Tobacco smoke, which is the largest single cause of cancer in Britain and the United States, is an artefact, but aflatoxin, the most potent cancer-producing chemical known and a frequent cause of cancer in the tropics, is the product of a natural mould that infects crops stored in warm humid places. In parts of rural China cancer of the oesophagus is the most frequent single cause of death in men over fifty. Its origin is obscure. Industrial pollution and chemical food additives are unknown there. Cancer of the bowel afflicts Western populations with a high intake of meat and cancer of the stomach afflicts Eastern people living mainly on rice, but there is nothing to suggest that either of these cancers is due to artificial food contaminants. Cavallieri's environmental hypochondria is epitomized by his rhetorical question, "Have you ever felt unwell without a known cause?", as though the human body were a perfect machine that misfired only when the man at the petrol pump filled it with noxious fuel.

In a long tirade against agrochemicals and genetic engineering designed to raise crop yields, Cavallieri tells us that the world now produces enough grain to feed everyone adequately. This is true now, at least as far as cereals go, but it is estimated that by 1985 the world's annual grain shortage will be forty-five million tonnes, equal to half the present American grain surplus. He deplores the waste involved in feeding grain to animals in Western societies, but seems unaware of the much greater waste of grain due to pests which spoil about half the world's crops, and in some countries an even higher percentage; much of this waste could be prevented by chemical pesticides.

"The pill", Cavallieri writes, "is clearly a societal demand being both created and met by technology. Saturation advertising has created questionable personal priorities. . . . The so-called demands made by science on society are in part demands created by commercial interests through modulation and control of the collective will." What a load of Marxist verbiage! I am not aware of the Pill having been advertised to the public. News of it got around and women asked their doctors to prescribe it. Its most widespread use is in China, where commercial interests do not exist.

Cavallieri maintains that the subjugation of the environment is the major catastrophe of our time and deplores the loss of freedom to

breath clean air or drink clean water. In Britain, at any rate, the air has become much cleaner than it was at the beginning of the century, when half the children of Manchester had rickets because they rarely saw the sun and where one kilogram of soot fell on every square metre each year. When I look at medieval castles where the smoke from domestic fires escaped through a hole in the roof I count myself lucky that my house has chimneys. As to our water, Prince Albert died in 1861 of typhoid fever contracted from a contaminated well in Windsor Castle. I see no such danger threatening Prince Philip and I believe that most of us are better protected from contaminated air and water than our forebears were.

We are told that nowadays "the scientist rarely has the opportunity to pursue the research of his choice in whatever direction it may lead; the privilege is out of date". Instead, he has to huddle under to mission-oriented work dictated to him by the Office of Management and the Budget. This was a curious statement to read on the day I received a special issue of *Nature* filled with American papers about the rings and moons of Saturn. Cavallieri's lament is a caricature of American science, whose freedom, brilliance, dynamism and fertility are the envy of the world. He contradicts it by his own demand that "science, as well as technology, requires a certain amount of societally oriented guidance at this point in history". Where is such guidance to come from if not from the officials of a democratically elected government?

Today, he tells us, "a scientist knows beforehand that his ideas will be exploited". I have often wished that some of my ideas and discoveries were of the kind that could be exploited and have not given up hope that one day they may be. Not all exploitation is done by the Satans of Big Business.

I agree with Cavallieri when he writes: "In the search for knowledge you have to ask what you will do with the knowledge once you have gained it", but in practice you don't know what you will find, and once you have found and published new knowledge, it is open for use or abuse by anyone in the world. "In a technocracy everybody is resigned to the fact that if something can be done, it will be done." This reflects my own sentiments when Edwards and Steptoe announced their method of fertilizing human eggs in the test tube, but I have since overcome my objections, because the technique has helped childless couples; so far it has not given rise to uniformed babies, nor does it seem likely that it will lead to people destined for grades alpha to epsilon being bred in the incubators of Aldous Huxley's *Hatchet* and Conditioning Centre. Cavallieri proclaims, "It is unjust to impose irreversible changes on future generations." I agree, but I regard it as unjust to accuse the molecular biologists of planning to do this, rather than the physicists who are devoting their talents to the refinement of thermonuclear bombs.

To me molecular biology has provided a thirty-year-long procession of wonderful revelations about the chemical basis of life. Just when it seemed to be coming to an end, genetic manipulation opened grand new vistas of discovery. How and to what end, I do not know, but I find a scientist in whom they merely evoke, utterance and knowledge. Cavallieri's book will be widely read and believed by laymen. Those interested in the true state of the subject will find balanced and authoritative accounts of the applications of genetic engineering to medicine, agriculture and industry in the September 1981 issue of the *Scientific American*.

The fifth volume in the annual series *Studies in History of Biology* edited by William Coleman and Camille Limoges (200pp, Johns Hopkins University Press, £0.80/\$2.56) contains extensive articles by Stephen J. Cross, of the Department of the History of Science, Johns Hopkins University; John H. R. Taylor, of the Department of Biology, University of Cambridge; and Timothy Lender, of the Department of History, University of Arizona. The *Göteborg School* and the Development of Phenomenological Philosophy in the Romantic Era.



A detail of the decorated underside of the Stroganov box, a gold snuff-box engraved and nielloed on all sides with amorous scenes and figures in hunting costume. The snuff-box, which was made about 1770, is said to have been presented to Catherine the Great by Count Alexander Sergeevich Stroganov (1733-1811), one of the Emperor's closest advisers and a collector and patron of the arts. The fashion for snuff-boxes as decorative objects which were often presented to retiring foreign ministers was at its height in Russia by the end of the eighteenth century. The influence of the French masters becomes apparent during the reign of Catherine II, who travelled widely and bought collections in Paris. The picture is taken from Russian Gold and Silver by Alexander von Solodkov (1939) and 245 plates. Trefoll Books, £15.00/\$62.94 (004-4), which describes in detail over 200 examples of the art of the Russian gold and silversmith from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. The book also covers the organization of the goldsmith's trade in Russia, stylistic influences on the goldsmith's art, materials, techniques and typical objects, gold and silver marks, important centres of the art, masters, workshops and firms.

The poet and his camera

By Edwin Morgan

YEVGENY YEVTUSHENKO:

Invisible Threats
157pp, Secker and Warburg, £9.95
(until 31.12.81, £12.50 thereafter).
0 436 59220 7

This handsomely produced and attractive book is largely a collection of photographs taken by Yevtushenko, some 130 in black and white and thirty in colour. A dozen poems and an interesting introduction precede the collection, and in addition the photographs are all captioned with a note indicating where they were taken, and usually a short poem or a piece of prose written about them, as explanation or as comment or as imaginative contemplation of the image. The bulk of the translation is by Paul Fella and Natasha Ward, though Ted Hughes and Arthur Boyers did one poem each. The translations do not reproduce rhyme and metre, but with that important proviso they are efficient and readable.

It is very clear from the prefatory poems, from the introduction and from the dedication to Edward Steichen, that this is a book with a purpose. In the introduction, Yevtushenko says what a revelation he found Steichen's *The Family of Man* photographs at the American Exhibition in Moscow in 1957. They were "like a gigantic poem by Whitman, written not in words but with a camera. Through Steichen's photography, the invisible threads binding one nation to another had been made visible." The impact of Steichen's images of real people from different countries seemed to shatter the abstract clichés of the Cold War. When he saw that his own poetry was aiming at a wide audience, and especially at people who were not normally poetry readers, it was natural to step for Yevtushenko to take up photography with its potential as an international language. Helped by professional photographers, he learned as much as he could about the craft, and then in his wide-ranging travels "endeavoured to use it and poetry as a double-armed assault on the divisions and distrusts and oppressions of the family of man". Not land-

Siberia, and hit with an empty Pepsi-Cola bottle by an Irish prostitute in Sydney. The family of man does not always inke kindly in the idea of being recorded.

A few of the photographs have a straightforwardly literary quality: a horse with startling blond mane cropping grass; a girl's head seen through the interlaced lozenges of a wall in Samarkand. Sometimes there is a documentary interest which again seems to be the nucleus self-contained, in a shot of Japanese pearl-divers with white masks, white diving suits and orange woaden trousers; a Moscow cheer-leader holding up a ghinny curd of Polynesian verses for mass singing; a view of Zimbo Station in Siberia. Some images are strange, even bizarre: a man on a bench about to have his bare belly patted by a friend, a fur-balled man leaning against a picture of Christ painted on a linc in Baku. Some are lucky shots that both make and call for comment: a crippled veteran under a wall of fluttering want ads, a boy like a young Napoleon caught as he pauses behind the Director-General's microphone at Unesco in Paris. And some, as I must be said, are brutal or too obviously message-bearing: most of the shots of London, many of the shots of children, two lovers embracing against a background of national flags.

The caption-poems, which are brief - even at times epigrammatic - vary in persuasiveness. At times they preach or merely spell out in verbal terms what the eye has already taken from the photograph; but many of them are able to use the pictures as a springboard into something which is imaginative or moving and only to be expressed in words. A joiner is preparing bamboo for the making of furniture, and the poem refers to the raw flowering of bamboo and pursues a fancy of blooms breaking through a completed table. The sharp little poem accompanying a portrait of Dolores Ibárruri, "La Pasionaria", asks sceptically whether she isn't really a "Joan of Arc who fed it must be said, are brutal or too obviously message-bearing: most of the shots of London, many of the shots of children, two lovers embracing against a background of national flags.

With willow-branches, and with strong dry shafts of wood. Which once, perhaps, were willow-branches too. As the passage suggests, a feeling for

time, pervades many of the pictures and poems; as does also the sense of Yevtushenko's sparkling eye for the ordinary, the unimportant, the unpoetical. Typical is a photograph of a clean, sweeping round the steps of a vast monument.

A woman with a mop, clearly a poetess. I'll a famous general's monument. Does not realize her own worth. Exceeds the world's whole art of poetess.

The book, as my readers will be agreed, would be a salutary antidote for subscribers to the glossy magazine, who are the people most likely to be able to afford to buy it. It is full of haunting faces, all shopped, woodcutters, gold-miners, miners, card-players, horse-trainers, the very old. But what about the Steichenesque, its theme that the world is one? It is true that the laughing child, the woman at shopping, the workman with a shovel, are much the same whatever they are photographed, yet it is noticeable how often the photographs image one's life, or having it imaged by others, that supply the real right stuff of biography. We can never be enough of some writers, from T. E. Lawrence to Ian Fleming, or Stevie's friend Rosamund Lehmann (whose name she always wrote "Rosamund"). But the very ease with which we treat her, and she treats us, means that a biography is beside the point. As her executor, James MacGibbon, remarks: "What is there to record that has not already been expressed in her writings? . . . Me again is tantamount to an autobiographical profile. Some of the letters and reviews reveal her attitudes to poetry and religion with an authenticity that no biographer could have achieved."

That is certainly true. The impression of Stevie Smith in this book is overwhelming, almost too much so: it is not so much a question of her putting a head round the door and trilling Whoopee here I am again, as of plunging herself down in one's lap. That is an impression she would not have wished to make. She was not only an intensely professional writer but a sort of Parnassian whatever contrary impression the idiom of her poems may give. Her sweetest songs were those which told of sadness, thought, but tell of it by odd contrasts. As she wrote to her friend John Hayward during the war:

that is the sort of writing I admire, it is so controlled and cool, he has learnt what to do with private feelings, they are to be worked and worked and worked and never used in the slub, they are nothing but raw material for the writer to work into shape. I think Olivia Manning has this quality.

In the same letter she remarks that her novel *Over the Frontier* was "nothing to be proud of", and that "Mabel on Yellow Paper" just happened to come off, it had a sort of light-heartedness that seemed to flow from those judgments, not with what she says about her muse - "how I wish my muse would not only respond to the disagreeable and sad, because I nearly always feel agreeable and happy, and then - never a word, Muse velly dumb, but as soon as anything goes wrong the old girl gets going". Poetry she says, in a little essay called "My Muse", "is very strong and never has any kind of rest at all". All it has to do is "to make a strong communication".

The human creature is alone in his carapace. Poetry is a strong way out. Discussing in a letter to John Hayward the reason why she needed so much to write, she told him "it's not the fame, dear, it's the company."

The originality of her poems seems like isolation made visible. They are childish in the sense in which Henry James's children are childish, little images of dispossessed childhood, a quality all their own. Like such children she is never on the Side of Life, but of the fatigue which for many people is the only way of making a success of it. This even gets into theology, which she took such a zealous interest in and produces some unusual conjunctions, like the dialogue of Eve, who wants to be nothing, and Mary who loves life.

Going with that very definite personality in everything she wrote, revealing with apparent artlessness her joys and sorrows, prejudices and beliefs, is the actual and total privacy of her life. She invites us to feel at home with her but not to follow her there. Nor does it matter in the least, in terms of her self-presentation, whether she was "good" or "not": she would have been amused by all the ways the word is used. Whether being looked after by her aunt or looking after her (a letter notes that she preferred the latter), having or not having an affair with George Orwell (a friend assured her friend James MacGibbon that she did, but he is inclined to agree with Orwell's biographer Bernard Crick that she didn't), she seemed incapable of the kind of multiple act of imaging one's life, or having it imaged by others, that supply the real right stuff of biography. We can never be enough of some writers, from T. E. Lawrence to Ian Fleming, or Stevie's friend Rosamund Lehmann (whose name she always wrote "Rosamund"). But the very ease with which we treat her, and she treats us, means that a biography is beside the point. As her executor, James MacGibbon, remarks: "What is there to record that has not already been expressed in her writings? . . . Me again is tantamount to an autobiographical profile. Some of the letters and reviews reveal her attitudes to poetry and religion with an authenticity that no biographer could have achieved."

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friends of hers. They used to sit late in Stevie's room, apparently reluctant to withdraw into spousality, and the husband once made in her presence a heartlessly though mildly obscene remark to his wife about the dog's behaviour with her.

I yawned. Miriam and Horlick said Goodnight. And went. It was 2 o'clock and Miriam was quite white with sorrow. Very well then, Goodnight.

Though she was adept at hitting off daily dolours like this, and especially those concerning "the way that is in marriage", the solitary fancy of her muse does not soar in such a context. Much more memorable is the cry of the wife in "Lightly Bound": "You beastly child I wish you had miscarried/You beastly husband I wish I had never married!" Things were different in 1936, but perhaps it was their critical sense that led John Hayward and Rupert Hart-Davis to advise its omission from a collection of hers, rather than the fact that "Goodnight" might be thought obscene (as she called it) or dangerously close to an actual conversation.

Some of the poems will none the less have a special interest for the Stevie Smith addict, particularly a highly accomplished exercise in Miltonic, "Stanza Speaks", which she wrote when hardly more than a schoolgirl, and a charming version in Lallans ("mixed speech" as she calls it) of the Sapphic fragment on lying alone, which she wrote in her copy of *Agenda* (Autumn 1966) beside Peter Whigham's version entitled "Loneliness". (It is typical, incidentally, that in reply to a suggestion that she should do some Sappho translations, she should have written: "I can't make head or tail of that ancient girl . . . one word sometimes and the rest of the page occupied by learned commentaries and cross-references of the type 'But see Schickelgruber'".

Yet his poetry of place is not without its banality. "Because it teaches us to die/We love and hate where we were born" is a ponderous, metronomic piece of soothing, unusual in a collection where a measured lucidity is the norm. He moves easily from relaxed, unrhymed pentameters (as in his excellent, and bitter poem, "Trailla") to free verse in short lines.

Nor is urban, small-town Ulster his only subject. Much of the book is made up of love elegies, a subject which elicits his best lyrical lines. Of a lost lover, he writes, "But I'll remember. When you left you left an emptiness. It opens with my arms." Love-writing as candid and direct as that is less common today than we might imagine.

Williams, possibly overdoes his melancholy, as in "A Marriage", or "Morning". In the latter poem a closing attempt at hope or affirmation reads like an unconvincing afterthought, given the morbid relish of the opening lines. A poetry like his, however, which is one of experience and testimony, of insight earned through suffering, does run the risk of its own openness. "Trailla", the most impressive poem in the collection, is not entirely immune to that kind of criticism. It describes an

arrival at identity by way of an episode from Williams's childhood. The narrative is handled discreetly enough, but his meditation on Ireland and its character and troubles, while truthful, is guidedly naked. There is something to be said for impersonality in tasteful quantities. Williams's narrative skills are abundant. What he might think of acquiring is an appropriate interest in fiction to go with them. Yet "Trailla" is worth persevering with for its moving closure, proof enough that with Patrick Williams we have a poet whose future work deserves to be followed:

My trials to us have only just begun And questions ask one question answers But if the search is all there is, at least to you it has a base, almost a home.

The Piccadilly Festival 1981, at St James's Church, Piccadilly, is staging the first ever continuous reading of the works of William Blake in St James's, the church where Blake was baptized. The full programme, "A Day and a Night in the Life of William Blake", will run from 7.30pm on Tuesday November 10 until 12 midnight on Wednesday November 11. The 800-odd pages of the Penguin Collected Blake will form the basis of the text; admission to the reading, which, it is calculated, will last 28 hours, will be 75p.

The Commonwealth Institute and the National Book League invite entries for the 1982 Commonwealth Poetry Prize. A prize of £500 is awarded annually for a first published book of poetry in English by an author from a Commonwealth country other than Britain; publishers are requested to submit titles published between July 1, 1981 and June 30, 1982 to: The Librarian (Poetry Prize), The Commonwealth Institute, Kensington High St, London W8, Great Britain.

The Muse of the daily dolours

By John Bayley

POETRY

STEVIE SMITH

Me Aglin
Uncollected Writings. Edited by Jack Barbara and William McBrien
360pp, Virago £9.95.
0 418 068 217 X

"Beckford is an author who should not be followed home." So begins Stevie Smith's *Observer* review of *Life at Fonthill*, an edition and translation (he wrote in Italian) of the correspondence of William Beckford, published in 1957. A great admirer of *Valdek*, as one might expect, Stevie Smith takes a brisk line with Beckford's personal life and habits:

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A humanist in his time

By Nicolas Barker

GEORFFREY KEYNES:

The Gates of Memory

428pp. Oxford University Press £12.50
0 19 812657 3

In 1957, at a small gathering at the Royal College of Surgeons to celebrate his seventieth birthday, Geoffrey Keynes, only half-joking, said: "I wonder how many of you I shall see in here in thirty years' time". Twenty-four years later, he has written his autobiography, a book of impressive length, as detailed and precise as his scholarly work, and with an index compiled by himself. Here is a man who went off to Rugby in the first year of this century; whose memories stretch back into nineteenth-century Cambridge, where he learned to collect butterflies and fossil bones; who was already a qualified surgeon before the first World War, in which he lost his best friend, Rupert Brooke — he is, his memory unquenched, vitality still strong, revealing this remote past.

Keynes's achievements hestride so many fields: his acquaintance, over so many years, has included notably fertile friendships with such a range of people that one can only wonder that so much can be compressed into a single, if substantial, book. Besides his distinguished surgical career, he has amassed one of the greatest collections of books in the world, written a shelf-full of books himself, and recovered the unique genius of William Blake; he inspired and organized Bob, the one great English ballet of this century, saved Virginia Woolf from her first attempted suicide, and has been chairman of the Trustees of the National Portrait Gallery.

All this would be nothing if he had written a full book about it. But his autobiography is in many ways his most original work. Deprived of the formal apparatus of a learned monograph or article, he has struck out on his own and two characteristics give *The Gates of Memory* a special quality. The first of these is an overriding desire to tell the truth, even, almost especially, if it hurts the teller. Keynes was brought up among Darwinists, and his desire for truth is scientific; he knows that truth prevails not just as a result of the setting out of facts, but also as a result of the way in which they are set out. A fool can, if he is cunning, tell the tale of his folly in a way that absolves him from blame for it. Reality requires a natural choice of words; as well as impartiality of mind: always honest, how much harder this is when recounting one's own life. The result, in Keynes's autobiography, is not graceful but — and this as true of the accounts of his many successes as of his few failures — it has the ring, sometimes lush, of truth.

The other notable quality is craftsmanship. Craftsmanship is the quality that Keynes admires almost more than any other. It is the characteristic in Blake, apprenticed to the engraver James Basire, that he is apt to defend when the poet, artist, seer or genius seems too prominent. Appreciation of his craftsmanship was the basis of his friendship with Ezra Pound. ("He and I used to regard ourselves as fellow craftsmen, he carving the outlines of the human form in stone, I moulding the shapes of the secret organization"), and with Stephen Goodden, whom he rightly says is underrated.

It accounts for his own happy preoccupation with building walls, carving gargoyles, and so on. Above all it has dictated the course of his own professional life.

The practice of surgery was the central passion of my life. I was a craftsman, by instinct, not a teacher, an administrator, a committee man, or a medical politician. I did not dislike teaching and enjoyed the company of students, but I had a strong desire to

acquire as many works by Blake as possible and to form a library of original editions of English literature, science, and medical history. In addition I had a growing family of sons who had to be educated. All these things required a larger income than was awarded to a professor, and could only be provided by a private practice; this had the additional advantage of fulfilling my desire to have human relations with a proportion of my patients, which one loses if they are all confined in hospital beds as "cases".

Such determination, the desire to reach certain goals, and the mitered effect of setting about them, are all part of the craftsman's approach.

It was this, as much as anything, that kept him out — but he wished to be in it, which he did not — of the Bloomsbury Group. His brother Maynard, a natural point of contact, was distanced from Geoffrey by his more complex intelligence: Geoffrey relates how "when Maynard got his Eton scholarship, with a small boy's impulsive enthusiasm, I flung my arm's round Maynard's neck, only to be pushed impatiently away. He was too old, being already fourteen, for such demonstrations of affection." It was purely coincidental that Geoffrey happened to have a room in the Brunswick Square house where Virginia took her overdose. A lightning ride with Leonard Woolf to St Bartholomew's Hospital where he obtained a stomach pump, saved her. "Many years later I suggested to Leonard Woolf that I deserved some token of gratitude," and Leonard gave him the manuscript of her "On Being Ill". When Maynard married Lydia Lopokova, Lydia and Geoffrey — in their very different ways alike, both direct and uncomplicated — got on well, and their friendship lasted until her death.

Even as a child Keynes had been fascinated by medicine. As a three-year-old he had been found on the nursery floor studying a book open at a diagram of the circulation of the blood. Because of the matter-of-fact directness of his approach, Keynes's medical career was always more distinguished than orthodox. The First World War, giving rise as it did to greater responsibilities and a larger than usual number of medical horrors, encouraged a mind naturally independent. When obliged to succour a critically injured man in a gun pit, his description of his own courage, which almost earned him an MC, is clinical:

I ordered my legs to take me there, but another part of my brain refused to pass on the necessary instructions. I soon succeeded in reaching the position, having fallen into several times on the way when shells were heard approaching. It was only about 200 yards to go, but the cerebral conflict involved in doing anything so contrary to nature caused a most strange sensation. Was this "courage"? When I reached the gun pit, the gunner was almost dead and nothing could have been done to save him.

With this behind him, and after a chance meeting "as so often happens in real life, it is knowing the right people that counts", Keynes embarked on his successful career at Bank's, which was a punctiliously recorded as the successes. War experience gave him an early insight into the importance of blood transfusion, and he was largely responsible for its introduction. As a routine surgical procedure, giving the first broadcast appeal for blood donors in 1927, he also pioneered "conservative" surgery for breast cancer, against violent criticism from traditionalists who believed in complete removal. Keynes insisted on treating every patient as a separate problem, rather than one of a series of standard "cases". "I have ever since that time tried to eliminate the word 'case' from my writings. It had become a universal curse in medical thinking and still is." Perhaps the most striking example of this in his long life is his interest in myasthenia gravis, a paralytic condition notoriously hard to

diagnose. It arose from his concern with thyroid surgery, and led to a final anatomical description of the thymus gland, whose removal proved a cure for the disease. This work has given Keynes a permanent place in medical history, and the chapter in which he describes it is one of the most fascinating, to a layman, in *The Gates of Memory*.

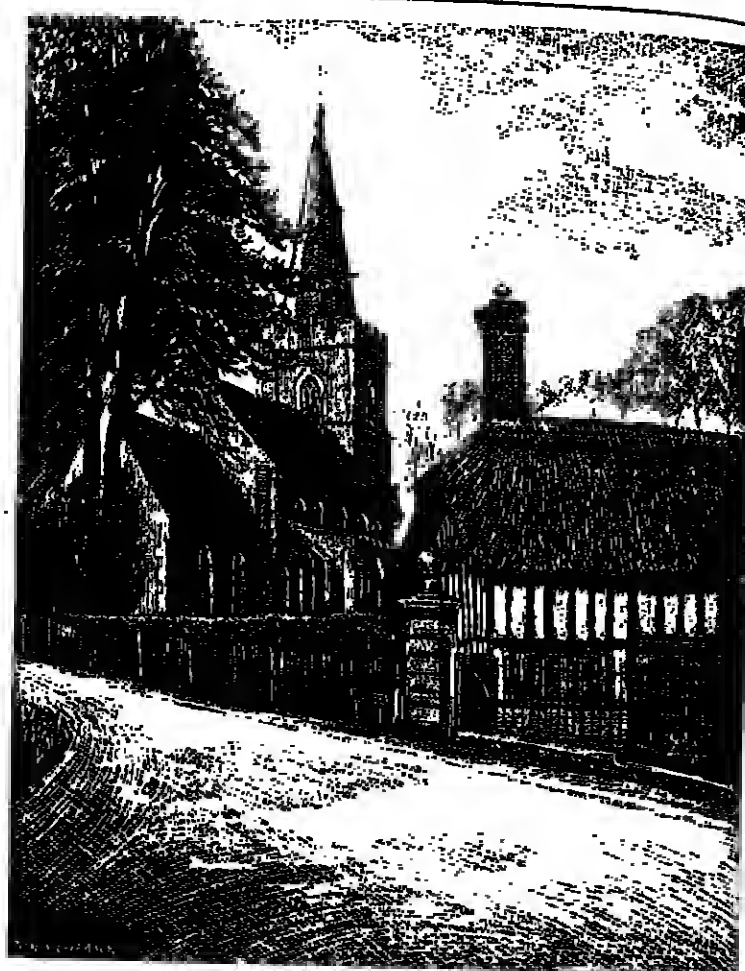
But it is as a collector, and as the friend of so many of the great artists and writers of his time, that the layman will remember Keynes. The change from collecting butterflies to collecting books was due to Rupert Brooke. As Brooke began to publish his poetry, "I began collecting and keeping everything he produced, the natural beginning of my bibliographical instincts with, I felt sure, a worthy object." This has led to the extraordinary collections of Donne and Thomas Browne, Evelyn and Boyle. If Keynes has a natural affinity for the seventeenth century, it is buttressed by his great medical collections of the works of Harvey, Lower and Sydenham; he is equally at home in the nineteenth, with Jane Austen and Hazlitt, or the eighteenth, with Gibbon and Blake.

Keynes wisely limits the space he gives to "collectors' tales" — other people's triumphs are less interesting than one's own — but no one can fail to be stirred by the heroic recovery of the Blake-Primer archive from Victoria Island, Vancouver, or the miraculous return of the great coloured print of "The Canterbury Pilgrims", through his agent and friend "Puff" Kersley. Blake remains the apex of his collecting and editing, and the work that began with his bibliography (1921) has been crowned with the great facsimiles of the Blake Trust.

In the end, it is people who have meant most to Keynes, and he no less to them. Rupert Brooke is first and foremost. Keynes has done so much to rescue him from the "Eddie Marsh legend", most of all in his edition of Brooke's letters; if a stronger image than the "golden boy" now prevails, it is due to Keynes. But later friendships, with Walter de la Mare, Edmund Blunden and above all Siegfried Sassoon; with professional colleagues, George Crank, Thomas Dunhill, Lord Gooch; in ballet the already knew Lifar, Sokolova, Dolin, Ninette de Valois, Marie Rambert, before Job gave him a permanent part in ballet history; and with less famous figures like Cosmo Gordon, commemorated no less affectionately — all these have given a colour and variety to Keynes's long life that is the perfect foil to his own energy and vitality. If you ask why so many different people, sometimes notoriously shy or difficult, should have enjoyed his friendship, the answer is simple: he was always there, practical and uncomplicated. Even now he is trying to help the young to set out in life at an age when he might well be demanding their help.

One last feature of *The Gates of Memory* cannot be overlooked; there are over fifty illustrations of the main persons and places in the story. This practical aid offered to the reader's imagination is wholly in keeping with Keynes's style and purpose: to say that it makes the book would be unfair to the text; together text and pictures become one, a self-portrait in words and images of a lifetime spent in such varied activity, some parts of it stressed more than others, but all of it recognizably the life of a man who for almost a century now has made himself a unique place in medicine, literature and the arts. The story of his life is as vital and direct as the man himself.

Testimony: the Memoirs of Dmitri Shostakovich, which was first published in 1979, has recently been reissued as a paperback (289pp. Faber, £5.71 (1122)). The memoirs were edited by the Soviet musicologist Solomon Volkov by arrangement with Shostakovich and were smuggled out of the Soviet Union to be published after the composer's death in 1975.



"And things are done you'd not believe. (At Madingley on Christmas Eve", a drawing of the Church of St Mary Magdalene and the lodge house Madingley from The Cambridgeshire of Rupert Brooke: an illustrated guide — written and illustrated by Denis Cheeson (24pp. Denis Cheeson, £1.65, 0 256614 1 4). The book contains twenty prints of the places mentioned in Rupert Brooke's poem "The Old Vicarage, Grantchester" each of which is accompanied by a quotation from the poem, a brief note on the architecture and history of the place and details of its paintings and local objects of interest.

Disgruntlements

By Graham Hough

HARRY T. MOORE AND DALE B. MONTAGUE (Editors):

Frieda Lawrence and Her Circle
Letters from, to and about Frieda Lawrence

145pp. Macmillan. £15.
0 353 27600 0

Frieda Lawrence and Her Circle is a thin collection of bits and pieces, outcome of the present mania for printing every scrap of material connected, however vaguely, with any writer anyone has ever heard of. The title claims too much; the sub-title, "Letters from, to and about Frieda Lawrence", is an accurate description. The letters all date from the years after D. H. Lawrence's death, and so contribute nothing to his biography. It is true that Frieda Lawrence's life is of some interest in itself, but these letters throw little light on that either. The first long letter is to Edward Tilt, an American who had published an unexpurgated edition of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in Paris in 1929. After Lawrence died he was interested in publishing more of the remaining work, and for a couple of years corresponded with Frieda about these plans. Frieda was in a middle over publication rights. She had made incompatible promises of Lawrence manuscripts to all sorts of people, and was engaged besides in awkward negotiations with Lawrence's brother and sister over disputed claims to the literary property. She was naturally anxious to secure her own position, and Tilt, while looking after his publishing interests, tried to advise her. Frieda does not come out of all this particularly well; she appears as self-centred, unreliable and always ready to make a confused situation worse by covering it up with bluster. Tilt was patient and considerate, and seems genuinely to have done his best for everyone; but the whole tedious affair might better have been left to die a natural death.

A handful of letters to a Mrs Crook, some from Frieda, some from Lawrence's sister Ada, continue the same theme. "Auntie" Crook had lived in Venice, and had

been the friend of both Frieda and Ada (Lawrence) Clark, both of whom confided their difficulties to her. The letters reveal that Ada, extremely decent and generous, took Frieda's part at first, but in the end became extremely tired of her — a not uncommon experience.

The largest body of letters is between Frieda and Richard Aldington. They date from the 1940s and 1950s, when Frieda was back in New Mexico. Some concern a visit by the Aldingtons to Taos, during their wartime sojourn in America. The rest are a desultory exchange from later years, when Aldington was settled in France. These should have been the most interesting of all, as Aldington was an old friend and he and Frieda had much in common, but in fact, a good deal is trivial — weather, visits, arrangements, etc. — and much of the rest consists of two paranoias in search of suitable grudges. In general Frieda comes across as a lively old battler, pugacious, indomitable and affectionate; but she is obsessed with Lawrence's reputation, which in her view was not high enough, and she sees a conspiracy of publishers, literary agents and critics against him. Similarly, she inflated her own importance and this led her to see the world outside her own circle of approval as very small beer. A little of this is entertaining enough, but Frieda's reactions are too crude and too predictable to be of lasting interest.

Aldington's case is sadder. After so early success he fell on hard times. Quarrelsome, touchy and unreliable, he could find no place for himself in the English scene, and became a disgruntled exile. He felt that all his work was undervalued, and that there was a conspiracy against him. Most of these letters date from the period when he had just brought out his book on the other Lawrence, *Lawrence of Arabia: A Biographical Enquiry*. This was the first systematic debunking of the T. E. Lawrence legend, and as at that time (1955) T. E. L. was an almost universally accepted public hero, Aldington attracted widespread opprobrium, and some extremely venomous attacks. As it turns out, he seems to have been right; and the bitterness and resentment expressed in these letters was justified.

HISTORY

RUTH McCURIE:

Coram's Children
The London Foundling Hospital in the Eighteenth Century

321pp. Yale University Press. £15.
0 300 02465 7

Charity began abroad, as far as waifs and strays are concerned. For centuries the best institutional care for homeless children could be found in the Catholic states of Europe, and generally it was provided directly by agencies of the Church. In Venice the Pietà and the Ospedale gave illegitimate girls some of the finest musical education to be had anywhere. In Florence there was the Ospedale degli Innocenti. Meanwhile, in Lisbon, the Santa Casa de Misericórdia supplemented municipal work on behalf of widows and orphans, and one sort of escape from institutional life was afforded to the *orfas del rei*, who were sent out as brides for the colonists of Goa. Above all, in France the efforts of Vincent de Paul had resulted in a consolidation of charities which included l'Hôpital des Enfants-Trouvés. When Vincent was canonized in 1737 England had still not made a start, although there were foundling hospitals in several provincial towns in France, and soon to be others (Tours and Angers, for instance).

Why was Britain among the slower nations to come to terms with the growing urban tide of abandoned children? Even in backward Russia (not to mention Peru) there was a founding hospital by 1772, thanks to Catherine's restless desire to keep up with the Habsburgs. In her fascinating new history of the London hospital, Ruth McCurie suggests that it was "Calvinist influence, the religious thought" which undermined the motives of salvation prevailing in Catholic countries. This is not wholly plausible. Amsterdam, for one thing, had its civic *Weeshuis* much earlier; and the active influence of English Calvinism, even among reformers of manners, was somewhat dispersed in the early eighteenth century. Again, Ruth McCurie mentions the problems in setting up a respectable corporate enterprise in the wake of the South Sea episode: "It is likely that the Bubble fiasco increased conservatism and suspicion of innovation at the same time that it decreased the ability of many who suffered financial ruin to commit themselves to the support of any charity." Yes; and one might add that the scandal of the Charitable Corporation made things even more difficult in the early 1730s. As late as 1748, in a curious chapter of *L'Esprit des Lois*, Montesquieu was to congratulate Henry VIII on suppressing the monasteries, arguing that almsgiving perpetuated poverty and that the commercial and industrial rise of England dated from this epoch.

But the advocacy of men like Addison began to mould ruling-class attitudes, and in 1739 the hour of his man — that is, the long efforts of Thomas Coram finally had their reward. The Royal Charter was granted on October 17 of that year, and the hospital began life in Hatton Garden eighteen months later. It was not until 1745 that all was ready for the move to a new site in what we now call Bloomsbury, where the famous Hospital buildings stood for almost two hundred years. Coram's Fields still happily derives itself from the children's recreation, with sides to swings framed by the odd Victorian-looking colonnades: packs of brownies and playgroups are much in evidence, while the Institute of Child Health stands across the road. (It is a part of London not terribly well known even to the educated public, though it lies on a direct route from Gray's Inn Road to British Museum.) The treasures of the hospital have been removed to the Thomas Coram Foundation, a repository of the odd tokens left with the children; the keyboard, alone, of the organ Handel gave to the chapel; and the resplendent (Hogarth's portrait of Coram, at the head of the stairs; Hudson's, of the

Roubiliac, Rysbrack, Copley and West). The sublime and the ridiculous clamped together — as they were in the Hospital's early history. Today the Foundation looks out on the complex of Gate Cinema and Brunswick Centre, a concrete erection with greenhouses climbing up the wall. The Hospital always had its links with the wider world, and a significant place in London cultural life through its musical activities.

In its earliest years the institution weathered a number of problems, including (sadly) a breach between the Governors and the founder. However, other notable philanthropists, led by Jonas Hanway, began to take a share in management; the connection of Hanway necessarily meant the opposition of Samuel Johnson, but against that there were Hogarth and Landel. In 1749 a grand concert featured a performance of the Fireworks Music, no doubt heard to better effect than at its damp-squib première, weeks before. Next year the great series of Messiah performances began. Meanwhile, dependable servants had been found for the key offices, administrative and nursing. Machinery to supervise "country nurses" who looked after the children during infancy began to evolve, although it was not very efficient to start with. The routine which grew up is absorbingly described by Ruth McCurie, with a wealth of telling (and usually fresh) anecdote.

One thing which understandably causes the author some disquiet is the rapid disappearance of women from all but menial supporting roles. To get his plan off the ground, Coram had enlisted the patronage of twenty-one of the greatest aristocratic ladies in the land, with nothing more plebeian than a baroness among them. McCurie notes that they were mainly young (most of them mothers, though she does not say so); they are listed rather strangely with maiden name and title, as though one should refer to Dinna Spencer, Princess of Wales, and their family interconnections are charted in a diagram — a point to which I will return. However, after this, women were conspicuously excluded from the running of the Hospital. Lady Betty Germalin was asked to become titular Chief Nurse in 1752, but as she was over seventy her refusal on health grounds seems pretty reasonable.

The first great crisis arose later in that decade. In 1756 Parliament allowed the Governors to widen the net considerably by admitting all children under two months who were offered, instead of limiting the intake to the ways employed hitherto. The influx of "exposed and deserted children" received put a huge strain on the system, despite a sizeable parliamentary grant and an increase in staff. One response was the establishment of branch hospitals in several parts of the country; there was opposition to these even before they were opened, from 1757 onwards, and they had all closed down again within twenty years. At the same time pressure grew in London, the mortality rate (formerly very creditable by the standards of the day) worsened, and political manoeuvring allied to changing social ideology led to the withdrawal of the special government grant. The so-called "General Reception" was a brief experiment: saddled with large numbers and an inadequate income, the Governors had to try to dispose of their charges as soon as was decently possible. The last child taken on the General Reception, in 1760, was despairingly labelled "Kitty Fins" (another girl was given the name Clarissa Harlowe — at least more imaginative than Mr Bumble's series of Swobbles, Twists and Vilkins).

Slowly the Hospital learnt to readjust, as the inflated numbers passed gradually through the system. Legacies and gifts had declined from the level of the 1740s, and new sources of income were needed. In time, this gap was filled by selling off building leases, with the creation of wards (the end of the century of the

scheme covered by Daniel J. Olsen in *Town Planning in London* (1984). Brunswick and Mecklenburgh Squares took shape, the fine prospect towards Highgate across Lamb's Conduit Fields was blocked off forever, and at length the site had become fully urban. Effective methods of cost control allowed the Hospital to keep afloat, though it often had to borrow in advance of getting the residual grant from Parliament. The sound business sense which had guided the behaviour of the Governors since Coram's time made sure that the institution was not a nineteenth-century failure in a competitive healthy state. It was not exactly prosperous. There Ruth McCurie's story ends; the building survived until 1926, the children later moved to Berkhamstead, and then in 1954 a policy of general fostering was adopted.

It is a chapter of social history abounding in every kind of interest, and McCurie has not wasted her opportunity. Simply as an administrative history it is more entertaining than the previous, rather stodgy work by Nichols and Wray. The author ferrets out from the archives more revealing incidents, while she is less inhibited about money matters. As one would expect, she is also able to speak more freely than her earlier authorities on the subject of illegitimacy, and her handling of sexual mores has clearly benefited from recent studies of the family (a surprising omission from the list of works on parents and children is that of Lawrence Stone). There is reference to the preliminary inquiries of Laslett and Oosterveen, though their important work on *Bastardy and Its Comparative History* evidently appeared too late to be incorporated. There are excellent sections on such matters as diet, paediatric practice, and educational provision for the inmates. Useful comparisons are drawn at intervals with the practice in Paris and Amsterdam, and good use made of students of the poor such as Olwen Hufton. Though the narrative is occasionally grim, McCurie manages to see the bright side where it exists — and that is an

essential qualification for the historian of this, or any allied, topic. Taking it all in all, the boys and girls under Hospital's care were profoundly lucky. Their life expectancy was no better than that of the population at large, but surely superior to that of an unprotected foundling in the nurseries of St Giles. They were fed and clothed decently; the country nurses often developed an abiding affection for them, and they escaped the harsher consequences of family life in a world of social disturbance. The girls were educated quite as well as their peer-group outside, the boys rather better than that. Cure was taken to find them a good apprenticeship, and while a few experienced cruel treatment at the hands of unsuitable masters (there are even cases of murder on record), this was in no sense a direct function of their hospital origin. They lived in an institution actively supported by men of the calibre of Hanway, Charles Burney, Mead, John Sturges, Charles Burney and others; William Cadogan, the Dr Spock of his day, served as house physician, experimented with small-pox inoculation methods, and wrote a report on the nurseries. If the routine was somewhat regimented, then that is what many children thrive on, especially those from an emotionally insecure background. There was certainly no roccoco "discipline and punish" about it. The Hospital had its own daily bathhouse (Povis Well, its own milkman on the spot, its own gallery and concert programme. When the boilers needed replacing, they called in Count Rimford, surely the most distinguished heating consultant known to history. The handicapped were well looked after, and kept on as adults since there was nowhere else in Hanoverian England for them to go.

All these aspects are well covered in *Coram's Children*. A slight doubt attends only Ruth McCurie's generalisations towards that trendy handmaiden of the muses, Clonidine. It is diverting enough to be told that the menial age of the proposed gov-

The artists of the lives

By Edward Burns

J. D. BROWNING (Editor-in-Chief):

Biography in the 18th Century
192pp. New York: Garland. \$25.
0 8240 4007 4

In his introduction to this collection of papers, given originally to the McMaster Association for Eighteenth-Century Studies in 1978-79, Clarence Tracy sets up an opposition between "art" and "science". In such papers, which he claims "had not greatly concerned people" in the eighteenth century, whereas "the twentieth century tends to put truth and poetry into an adversarial relationship". Tracy's attempt to tie essentially disparate essays into a controversy around one dead issue serves to usher in James Noonan's hypothesis of a movement in eighteenth-century biography from general "theory" to particular observation, and its "cause" in contemporary ideas of human nature. In fact, Noonan's paper is largely concerned with recording his failure to establish that it becomes an illustration of its own caveat against "causality" in literary studies.

His argument is not uninteresting, but it is, of necessity, inconclusive. Having reached this point he doubles back on himself to examine those problems of causality inherent in biography, with disappointingly lame results. The salvage job doesn't retrieve that much. Perhaps causality is only really problematic when used to link the literary to the non-literary; or perhaps the fault lies less in the enterprise than in the lack of guide

posts. Elizabeth Elstob, is worthy of attention in her own right. She was the author of the first Anglo-Saxon grammar to be written in English, a labour undertaken for explicitly feminist reasons, in that classical scholarship was a traditionally male domain.

The most distinguished of the other papers are Nigel Glendinning's illuminating account of Goya's relationship to the conventions of portraiture, and Georges May's discussion of "Biography, Autobiography and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century France". In a sense May's argument is as negative as Noonan's; but the comparative lack of eighteenth-century French biography leads him to the more interesting proposition that biography is an essentially fictional form, dependent on conventions of character, and narrative devices, developed primarily in the novel. As a collection of papers this volume suggests surprisingly little coherence of method or objective. The essays, in contrast, are wide-ranging in both quality and kind; a mixture of the obtuse and the stimulating seems almost as random as the work of the antiquaries themselves.

European Textile Printers in the Eighteenth Century: A Study of Peel and Oberkampf by S. D. Chapman and S. Chassagne (258pp. Heinemann Educational, £15, 0 436 32170 6) describes the development of printing across Europe and concentrates in detail on the successful textile family businesses of Robert Peel (father of the Prime Minister) in Lancashire, and of Christoph Philipp Oberkampf at Jouy, outside Versailles, with their important effects on international finance and

errors was 47.5 years, the median 47.0, and the mode "not a significant measure", but until we have a fuller conceptual and statistical matrix for these figures, they don't mean much. Up till now I had claimed the prize for publishing the least valuable findings in this area (Pope's *Odyssey* subscribers varied respectively 44, 43, 45); what the clinicier for personal achievement was in that period remains a very murky question. Nor am I convinced by all the family interconnections charted by McCurie among the great lady sponsors. Few of the Churchill clan could get on with one another, and the presence of an Egerton was unlikely to deter an Egerton to sit in the chair. The truth is that these were simply prominent figures in society, who knew most of the others among the group: their family connections include committees as well as alliances. In fact, of the twenty-one petting-cousins, despite their relative youth, a minority either had subscribed personally to Pope's volumes, or else had a husband or father (as was common) entering the family subscription. Such women were in favour of the encouragement of learning, of the Georgi project, of good deeds in all directions. To show a charity-specific element would need a different set of analytic tools.

These sections occur at the end of the book, and suggest no more than the possibility of a gentle appendectomy. Aside from that, we have a text of conspicuous merit: sober, articulate writing, of an abundance of relevant information. Above all, Ruth McCurie has enough human insight to be able to make discreet judgments on such matters as the response of the transplanted "country" children to their new London quarters, when the time came for them to leave their nurse. It is for her sympathetic and historically aware treatment of such issues that one particularly welcomes the book. It is not a bare chronicle, or an interpretation of data; it is a moving record of a brave and noble venture when Protestantism and piety finally engendered good works.

Meeting the man of destiny

By Douglas Johnson

FRANÇOIS KERSAUDY:
Churchill and De Gaulle
476pp. Collins. £12.95.
0 00 216328 4

It was Randolph Churchill who said that his father and de Gaulle were two giants of history, recognizing each other and speaking to each other from the very summit. For de Gaulle, Churchill was always the great artist of a great history. For Churchill, de Gaulle was always an impressive figure, unforgotably associated with the destiny of France, a country which he admired and loved.

But while this is all undoubtedly true, it is not the whole truth. During the war years it was Roosevelt who held Churchill's attention. The whole of Churchill's strategy in 1939 and 1940 was based on his conviction that Britain could win the war provided that America became a intelligent, and towards Roosevelt Churchill constantly behaved with an untypical deference. In his old age de Gaulle was fascinated by the figure of Mao Tse-tung, the man who seemed to symbolize a country which was older than history itself. He was probably tempted by the prospect of a meeting with Mao which, if it had taken place, might well have appeared as the rendezvous of the last towering figures of modern times who would, from a great height, have contemplated the more puny figures of their contemporaries.

Thus, where Churchill and de Gaulle were concerned, neither represented for the other the model, or the culmination, of statesmanship and achievement. While Churchill, the older and the more seatimely of the two, probably did come to look back on his early association with de Gaulle as if it had existed in a sunlit atmosphere, this did not mean that his approach to de Gaulle, especially in the 1940s, escaped from the realistic appraisals of a statesman who was single-minded in his determination to defend his country, and win the war. De Gaulle, always a hard man, with more than his share of cynicism and suspicion, and with his essential conviction that every statesman must simply defend his national interests, certainly appreciated Churchill's qualities but he was never starry-eyed or romantic in this appreciation. However indulgent the one may have been to the other, however forcefully the memory of how they shared the great dramas of 1940 may have persisted, however eloquent these two masters of language may have been when they spoke about each other, the fact remains that their relationship was not successful and that Franco-British relations were not adequately or effectively studied during the years when these two men governed, or in de Gaulle's case claimed to govern, their respective countries.

François Kersaudy is probably mistaken therefore in approaching his subject with a degree of sentimentalism, although his readers will be glad that he has considered the relationship between these two witty and picturesque men as a source of entertainment and enjoyment. Without

falling into the skough of anecdote – a terrible temptation where de Gaulle and Churchill are being considered, whether separately or jointly – he has written wittily about these great men and has told a good story. The fact that many of his long and numerous quotations have already appeared elsewhere does not detract from the neat and rounded manner with which he describes the relationship between the two men. The only serious disappointment arises from his failure to consult the large quantity of documents available in the Public Record Office, many of which are vital in this context. He has read and made good use of the Cabinet papers, and has also made admirable forays into the collections of documents housed in France, Canada, the Netherlands, the United States and elsewhere; but he has not looked at all the diplomatic and military papers which Churchill saw and which influenced his ideas and attitudes towards de Gaulle. In the summer and autumn of 1940, Churchill was overruling those of his advisers who were hostile to de Gaulle. But as time went by, and especially after the United States entered the war, it was the civil servants together with certain Cabinet ministers who defended de Gaulle, while Churchill seriously envisaged the possibility of replacing him by some other Frenchman. It is possible to follow the reasoning which led to these two positions.

Kersaudy claims that Churchill probably knew about de Gaulle before he met him, since Reynaud had mentioned him and his writings about armoured vehicles in a conversation they had had in March 1938; unfortunately, no reference is given in the book to support this supposition. Otherwise, it is assumed that Churchill knew about de Gaulle's deployment of tanks in a recent battle, and that he had read the reference to him in *The Times* of June 7, 1940, where he is described as being aggressively right-wing, intensely theoretic and fanatically committed to the mass employment of armoured vehicles. This would hardly have been a good introduction; and besides, Churchill had always been deeply convinced of the excellence of the French army, and his friendship with certain French generals, such as General Georges, would not have encouraged him to look favourably on this unruly and awkward junior officer.

We have no direct evidence concerning the impression which de Gaulle made on Churchill when they met in Downing Street on June 9. This nothing prepares the historian for the impression which Churchill gained of de Gaulle when he was to meet him in conference with the French government shortly afterwards. He reported back to the Cabinet that de Gaulle was young and vigorous and that he would probably replace Weygand as Commander-in-Chief should the existing French line of defence be broken. This mistaken view might well have had considerable consequences since when de Gaulle came to England on June 17 Churchill perhaps thought that he was greeting one of the most important officers of the French army, when in fact he was welcoming a largely unknown and junior general who was considered by his contemporaries to be a controversial

character with regrettable political ties. It is curious that François Kersaudy does not mention this episode and that he should rather pursue the unauthoritative story put about by Churchill that when he saw de Gaulle at the Prefecture in Taurus, standing stolid and expressionless in the doorway, he said to him, in a low voice and in French, "l'homme du destin". If he did say these words neither de Gaulle nor his aide-de-camp, Geoffroy de Courcel, who was standing next to the General, heard them. But he did speak to the Cabinet in glowing and precise terms about de Gaulle and this was probably the origin of an important misunderstanding. Kersaudy is quite right to point out that at Taurus de Gaulle also misunderstood what was happening, since he arrived at the meeting when it was mid-way through and he thought that Churchill was ready to approve the prospect of a French armistice when he had earlier, in de Gaulle's absence, explained that it was unacceptable.

It is natural enough to pursue this relationship in a narrative. We see how de Gaulle asserted himself, in

spite of his weakness, his poverty, and the intrigues which his fellow-Frenchmen fomented against him, sometimes with timid support from certain Englishmen. There can be no question that he impressed everyone, just as he irritated and exasperated them. There can be no doubt that he showed himself to be a master of negotiation, with a sense of purpose which often escaped his fellow negotiators who were more concerned with immediate objectives. This was a natural gift, since he had had little experience. His very aloofness, about which some of his compatriots complained, served him well, because he was constantly the centre of rumour. It is striking to see in the Foreign Office papers how varied were the different accounts which were passed on about his political ideas, attributing to him allegiance both to the extreme right and to the Popular Front. It would be interesting to know what appears in his personal file, not yet available for public inspection.

Had François Kersaudy adopted a more analytical approach, he might have reflected on the significance of

the agreements which were signed with him. Because of the uncertainty of the situation in France, the Gaullist movement was not recognized as a government. The agreement was with a committee, and with the leader of that committee, de Gaulle himself. Thus de Gaulle as an individual assumed considerable importance. All negotiations were with him, and as the Prime Minister showed a constant personal interest in him, other ministers felt that they too must have dealings with him. He became the focus for attention of the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office, the Service Ministries and the Treasury. It could almost be said that the British invented de Gaulle.

Not the least of Dr Kersaudy's qualities is the skill with which he negotiates the pitfalls of the many disputes on which Free France thrived. Had he been less tactful he might have mentioned among the reasons for de Gaulle's success, the mediocrity of some of his French rivals, and the amused, superior tolerance with which, in those days, the British used to view even the most difficult of Frenchmen.

The fortunes of peace

By C. M. Woodhouse

ANTHONY SELDON:
Churchill's Indian Summer
The Conservative Government, 1951-55
667pp. Hodder and Stoughton.
£14.95.
0 340 25456 4

In the nature of things, Churchill's last administration (1951-55) was bound to be less glamorous than his first (1940-45). To many it seemed to be an anti-climax and a disappointment. His colleagues spent much of their time and energy trying to force the old man to retire, though it is unlikely that any of the missed opportunities would have been grasped if Eden had succeeded him in 1952 instead of 1955. Since so many of our current woes are said to have their roots in mismanagement a generation ago, it is worth asking how much of the blame can be laid at Churchill's door.

Anthony Seldon does not attempt a direct answer to this question, though one discreet reference to Mrs Thatcher indicates his view that her administration will do a great deal more damage than Churchill's ever did. His judgment of Churchill is based rather on looking back at what he inherited than looking forward to what followed. He does not see Churchill's "Indian summer" as the prelude to a "winter of discontent".

Certainly he is right in refuting most of what was said at the time by both Labour and Conservative critics. Churchill's Labour opponents were proved grossly mistaken in representing him as a reactionary and a war-monger. They foolishly overlooked his record as a social reformer before the First World War, and their adoption of the slogan "Whose finger on the trigger?" was a grave blunder, at least as serious as Churchill's own "Gestapo" speech in 1945. In fact Churchill's record in office was the complete reverse of what Labour propaganda anticipated. He extended and consolidated the welfare state, and his foreign policy was consistently aimed at reducing tension with the Soviet Union.

There was the hope of achieving a summit meeting with Stalin on his successors that caused Churchill to postpone his resignation so many times. But equally he confounded his Conservative critics who thought him too old to carry the burden of office. Although his powers were declining towards the end, he was in fact absent through ill-health for shorter periods than Eden, his heir presumptive.

All this is very well argued by Mr Seldon. Apart from his convincing presentation of the case for regarding Churchill's last administration as the Conservatives' most successful period since the war, two other features of his book are striking. One is that he chose to complete it just before the date when, under the 30-year rule, the relevant documents in the Public Record Office would begin to become available for research. Although this decision is at first sight paradoxical, it is justified by the consideration that once the documents become available their volume will be so enormous that many years will have to be devoted to detailed monographs before a final assessment can be attempted at all. Seldon really had to choose between 1980 and 2000, and he chose right.

He has wisely relied on diaries, reminiscences, oral interviews, Hansard and the press. Practically everything he needed for his own chosen method of presentation is already available in one or other of these sources, without recourse to official documents. The oral material in particular will not be indefinitely available, as the PRO material eventually will.

This leads to the second striking feature of the book, which is his method of presentation. The title might at first sight suggest that this is just another compilation of anecdotes and reminiscences about the great man. But it is not. It is rather a methodical, and even monumental, examination of the machinery of government as it came into being under Churchill's last administration. There are large sections of the book in which Churchill is scarcely mentioned at all, though his style of government is always a powerful force in the background.

Seldon goes through the administration function by function, department by department, minister by minister, and even official by official. This was perhaps the first peace-time government under which there would have been any significant point in examining the personalities of the civil servants as well as the ministers. Perhaps the television series, *Yes, Minister*, could be regarded as part of the legacy of Churchill's last government. But it is curious that in spite of the rising power of the civil service, Seldon records constant criticism of "the poor state of inter-departmental co-ordination".

The explanation of this and other criticisms may be that Churchill's fertility in administrative innovation was not matched by his skill in choosing the coordinators. The introduction of "overlords" to supervise groups of departments was a notorious failure, largely for that reason.

To Churchill's credit, he was quick to abandon the idea when it failed. In this respect too he showed himself to be no bigoted reactionary. The only truly reactionary measure of his last years was the absurd re-establishment of the Home Guard. It was done to fulfil a pre-election promise; but another pre-election promise did not inhibit him from abandoning the equally reactionary plan to restore the University MPs.

There were other failures which were the obverse of Churchill's successes. Seldon rightly emphasizes the continuity of policy, both at home and abroad, from the years of coalition through the Labour government of 1945 to the new Conservative government. The continuity was not Churchill's work alone; in domestic policy it flowed from Butler's work at the Conservative Research Department, and in foreign policy from the mutual sympathy of Eden and Bevin. But in both cases there was a price to be paid for continuity. The dominant power of the Trade Unions today owes at least something to Churchill's determination to avoid confrontation at all costs. The decline of education and the escalation of public expenditure both owe something to Churchill's indifference to unwillingness to take painful decisions. A sentimental faith in the Commonwealth led not only to the fatal delay in joining the European Communities but also to the problems created by unlimited immigration.

These qualifications of the record are unavoidable. But Seldon's summing up is strongly favourable. "No government this century was able so to improve the country's fortunes from such a bleak starting point." Practically all the pessimistic predictions of 1951 were falsified by events. Churchill himself proved, despite his age, a strong Prime Minister whom his colleagues found it impossible to remove until he was ready to go; and despite his record in opposition, he proved himself a moderate and pragmatic administrator of his difficult inheritance.

A witness from Dixie

By P. J. Parish

C. VANN WOODWARD (Editor):
Mary Chesnut's Civil War
Steggs, Yale University Press.
£18.80.
0 300 02459 2

ELISABETH MÜHLENFELD:
A Biography
287pp. Louisiana State University Press. £12.
0 8071 0852 9

"I wonder what my attraction was," Mary Chesnut confided to the pages of her journal in 1861, "for men did fall in love with me wherever I went." She has certainly continued to charm generations of historians of the Civil War, and, in particular, of the Southern Confederacy. She knew just about everybody who was anybody in the Confederacy, and she had the priceless knack of being in the right place at the right time. She also had an insatiable appetite for gossip, an ear for a good phrase, and a tongue like a razor. It is small wonder that her *Diary from Dixie* has been plundered by an army of historians for as apt quotations, who have seized upon her property even more ruthlessly than Sherman's invading hordes in 1865.

Hitherto, historians have had to rely upon two very inadequate published versions of the diary. One of the editors of the first, published in 1905, was Isabella Martin, the friend to whom Mary Chesnut had entrusted her journals, who saw it as her duty to eliminate any material which she thought embarrassing or detrimental to the author, including, most notably, all her ruminations on slavery. The second, and somewhat fuller version, first published in 1949, was edited by the devoted Ben Ames Williams, with a keen eye for its readability, but with inadequate respect for the canons of historical scholarship. Now at last we have the full, scholarly edition which has been so much needed. It has been well worth waiting for, and it is highly appropriate that it should be the work of the most distinguished of living Southern historians, C. Vann Woodward, who provides an illuminating introduction and excellent explanatory notes (a little too salient, perhaps, in elucidating some of Mrs Chesnut's more frivolous remarks). There is, too, a first-rate index, although the reader might also have found useful at the outset brief biographies of some of the leading characters. Through a combination of meticulous scholarship, literary sensibility, and profound respect for the work of a remarkable diarist, he has succeeded in exposing the true nature of that work, without spoiling its quality or undermining its value.

It must be said however that *Diary from Dixie* is not a diary at all. (Professor Woodward has wisely chosen to abandon that title, which was not only inaccurate but unbecoming to the style and standing of the author.) Mrs Chesnut did indeed keep a journal at times during the Civil War, most regularly in its first year, and, again, in its closing stages, but she abandoned the journal completely for over a year from August 1862, and she kept it only fitfully at other times. The wartime journal was, the editor tells us, often scrappy and disjointed, sometimes consisting of little more than lists of names and cryptic abbreviations, and with little attention to style or continuity. The so-called *Diary*, now published virtually in full for the first time, was in fact written in the 1880s, in the last five years of Mrs Chesnut's life, some twenty years after the events which she describes. The diary form is preserved as a literary device, but the finished work is really a memoir, or a series of personal reflections and recollections, based upon the wartime journals. Strictly speaking it is not a "finished work" at all, for it seems clear that Mary Chesnut intended to amend and edit her manuscript, had she lived to do so.

Professor Woodward makes clear in his introduction, and Elisabeth Mühlentfeld makes even clearer in her biography of Mrs Chesnut, that the 1880s version is the product of very much more than a tidying-up opera-

tion. Some passages from the 1860s journals were omitted in the 1880s rewriting – and many of these are inserted in parentheses in the Woodward edition. (They contain many of the most significant and pungent of Mrs Chesnut's critical observations.) Other passages from the journals were greatly expanded in the 1880s version, and much entirely new material added. But the rewriting went much further still. Third-person narrative is turned into dialogue, her own thoughts are often put into the mouths of others, and meetings, conversations and incidents are rearranged to achieve a heightened effect. Professor Mühlentfeld is particularly illuminating in tracing Mary Chesnut's literary apprenticeship through her two unpublished novels and other shorter pieces written in the post-war years. She even shows, for example, how a dialogue passage from one of the novels was worked into the rewriting of the "Journals".

The combined literary and historical scholarship of Mühlentfeld and Woodward suggests that Daniel Aaron was even nearer the mark than he could have imagined when he suggested in 1973, in *The Unwritten War*, that Mary Chesnut was "the most likely candidate to write the unwritten Confederate novel". Earlier, in *Patriotic Gore*, published in 1962, Edmund Wilson perceived that she had "a decided sense of the literary possibilities of her subject", and he described the "diary" as, "in its informal department, a masterpiece". Informal it may be, but, as is now abundantly clear, it is neither on uncanonised nor on accidental work of art. Its literary merit, which is considerable, derives from years of hard work, painstaking attention to style and technique, and a richly stocked mind – for Mrs Chesnut was a prodigious reader, with the most catholic of tastes.

Now that the provenance of her work is fully revealed, Mrs Chesnut's place in American literature is more secure than ever. The much more debatable ground concerns the value of her work as a historical source. A "diary" which is a literary contrivance, but certainly not the faithful day-to-day record which it purports to be, can provide little or no worthwhile evidence of what happened – what was actually done or said – on a particular occasion. This is frankly admitted by Professor Woodward, but it is a very considerable admission which he has to make. His claim for Mrs Chesnut is not on the grounds of the specific information which she provides, but the vivid and life-like picture which she paints of a society in the throes of its life-and-death struggle. It is a valid point but it does not dispose of the difficulty created by the diary form. A genuine diarist may fairly say that "I write current rumour". I do not vouch for anything, or "I write what I hear not what I know", or "It is hard, in such a hurry as things are in, to separate wheat from chaff". But when such statements remain in a carefully worked account, written twenty years later, they raise more serious doubts. The problem goes beyond factual accuracy and reliability. The work is peppered with caustic criticisms of individuals, issues and institutions – would it like to be sure that these were the opinions and judgments of Mrs Chesnut as events unfolded during the war years, rather than retrospective comments, made with the benefit of hindsight. Professor Woodward does his best to provide reassurance on this point – and one could wish for no more trustworthy guide – but, in the absence of the original 1860s journals, which have not been published, it is impossible to be certain about any specific point.

In the circumstances, it is even more important than usual to get to know the person involved. But it was also a system which supported a way of life which she related to the full – hence her heartfelt cry that "slavery has to go, by course, and joy go with it".

Her sharpest criticisms are aimed at the impact of slavery upon standards of morality, particularly sexual morality. She rails against the double standards which she saw as the worst of models of purity, devotion and submissiveness, while their menfolk sired families of mulatto children. Harriet Beecher

Stowe's picture of Southern society is essentially a view from the top. She could be massively condescending about the "sandhills" or the pretensions to elegance, amid the grubby realities of small-town North Carolina society. ("Miss McLean is one of the beauties, the belles, the heiresses of the place... but she does not brush her teeth, the first evidence of civilization.") She paints a highly ambivalent picture of life on the great Chesnut plantation at Camden. She appreciates its elegance and order and its creature comforts, but finds it suffocating and often deadly dull. After tasting the delights of Richmond society, and becoming one of its luminaries, she faces the prospect of returning to Camden with all the enthusiasm of a recaptured prisoner on the way back to jail. The most vivid and entertaining chapters of Mary Chesnut's work are set in Richmond. They offer startling contrasts between the gaiety and gossip of a hectic social round and the constant reminders of a deadly war on the threshold of the capital – the bells tolling incessantly for the funeral of the fallen and the steady stream of sick, wounded and mutilated survivors. The war-making and the merry-making intersect constantly, often in time with the rapid fluctuations of Mrs Chesnut's mercurial temperament. One of her big set-pieces – the courtship of the dazzling Sally "Buck" Preston by the brave but gauche General Hood, who lost a leg and the use of an arm during the war – serves, in its mixture of romance and pathos, comedy and tragedy, as an apt metaphor for the trials and tribulations, and ultimate collapse, of Southern society at war.

Her opposition to slavery had little or nothing to do with concern for the slaves, whom she describes as "the lowest, laziest, fattest, most comfortably contented peasantry that ever would like to be sure that these were the opinions and judgments of Mrs Chesnut as events unfolded during the war years, rather than retrospective comments, made with the benefit of hindsight. Professor Woodward does his best to provide reassurance on this point – and one could wish for no more trustworthy guide – but, in the absence of the original 1860s journals, which have not been published, it is impossible to be certain about any specific point.

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After The Lecture

A very great man indeed to tend to the sick of the parish and construct a temple to his nation out of clippings from the newspapers, as longlasting say these commentators as Theodor's humid tomb.

When the leaves blow down the street and you are returning from the second funeral of the week, you will read all the overhaulers in your histories to train the beam of fame on humanity's achievements.

Come then to lectures where assortment of bright prejudice stripe the evening air. The way that fashion dzzles like a flashing wing is beautiful and leaves the dust of nothing undisturbed.

Even more apt is pure spectatorship, a life passed looking, listening, reading – no Pocomtante, no superior, but blessed by vistas and the calling of long birds among the evening limes.

But most of us are back in the smelly huddle, disappointed by our talents and our power to love. "Speak for yourself" says the One of Truthful Clockwork, and behind him faces of immortals fill with light.

In the foreground though careers are opening. "He smoked little, drank little and formented a great deal." When this is tidied into courses it will leave us no more able to cope with evil than we were before.

Peter Porter

White Socks

Professor Walter Tyler's standard work, *A Land in Turmoil: Peasants and Revolt in Fourteenth Century England*, could be lost among these shelves of books and files surrounding him. He's glaring out at smoke across the city.

Ever since he came back early from his son's Rock concert, slipped out at the interval – He'd put on an appearance, after all – And tried to work out what its implications were for England and its future.

He's been bothered by some distant aunts, fire or accident. There was a time He could identify them. Pushing Justin Or Susannah round a park of daffodils He'd imitate their urgent ululations.

And his children imitated him. Whatever was there of that parent In tonight's (he quotes) performance? Though Good humour got the better of him once, He smiles now at the thought, when something

On the keyboards (is it?) did bring back A tidling comic ditto he'd made up Or they'd made up together by the lake As green ducks disregarded so much force Of academic passion so adjacent.

That Susannah suddenly ignored The outsize her wise elders had inserted Under the bamboo about the edge's Instability. Neat clean white cotton socks One moment, and the next Susannah's

The *Theology of Revolution's* Also there beside his own fat book But he could never bring her mind to his Main thesaurus springing from a question On a paper he did for his scholarship.

In '39: that one revolts in hope, Nor in despair. And Justin stood and stared At him when recently he switched the news off, Couldn't stand all those (tite pictures any more, And started on a serious discussion.

Only he seemed to be taking seriously. Perhaps he'd really parodied himself, That mystic self of *After Life and Wycliffe*. Who, among the writers of reviews, would say In praise, "He makes the distant close at hand?"

R. D. Lancaster

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13 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3JF

Stowe had not shown the worst of slavery, for she had made Simon Legree a bachelor. There are no more bitter words in the whole book than Mrs Chesnut's oblique references to her father-in-law's infantile offspring. This painful subject is closely connected with her occasional protests about the subservience of Southern women, and their subordinate status in Southern society. A few references to the slavery of women and children are not to be interpreted as a serious commitment to feminism, but rather as a means of letting off steam in moments of frustration or after a quarrel with her husband. Mary Chesnut revealed too much in the opportunities and the status offered to her as the wife of a wealthy and distinguished husband to be depicted as one of the advance guard in the battle for women's liberation.

She predicted but awaited meekly the demise of slavery as a result of the war. Meanwhile she pondered the spina-like insensibility of her personal servants as liberation drew near, occasionally worried about the possibility of servile insurrection, and slithered with horror at the occasional sensation, such as the murder of one of her neighbours by her slaves. Her view of slavery, like her picture of a Confederate society, is shot through with uncertainty, irony, paradox and ambiguity – and therein lies the enduring fascination of her work. Mary Chesnut was a severe critic of her society and its ways, but she was also very much a part of them. From her pen flowed not only caustic comments on Southern dignitaries and Southern institutions but also a vivid picture of a society, full of dashing and handsome young officers, elegant and spirited young belles, all still adhering to a traditional code of conduct, sense of honour and set of social conventions. If at times Mrs Chesnut seems determined to puncture the romantic myth of the old South, she also cherishes it and is nourished by it. She has been extremely fortunate in both her editor and her biographer, and she is to be read, with circumspection certainly, but also with enormous pleasure.

Mrs Chesnut is free with her comments on the political and military events and personalities of the day. She is a staunch defender of Jefferson Davis against mounting criticism, and although confessing herself somewhat in awe of him, offers charming glimpses of the enervated president relaxing *en famille* (who would have guessed that the austere Davis and his wife would have given their infant daughter the nickname "Pic cake"?) as well as a heart-rending account of the death of their young son Joe, after a fall. She has surprisingly little to say of Robert E. Lee, but her comments on many of the leading politicians and soldiers are withering. General Bragg has "a winning way of earning everyone's detestation", while Joseph E. Johnston is dismissed as a perfectionist never quite ready to act, a congenial retreatist, and a eulogist who spun a web of disaffection and disloyalty to the Confederacy around him. Her greatest scorn is reserved for those who spend their energies in feuding, intrigue and destructive opposition, while the war remains to be won.

One of the nobling impressions left

by Mrs Chesnut's work, as by other first-hand accounts of the war, is of the power of rumour in an age before the arrival of instant news, and in a society which could not put its trust in the mere word of mouth. False reports abound, whether of battles or casualties or political appointments or foreign intervention. Mrs Chesnut complained that "so much that we believed is not true", and she offers abundant evidence to support the axiom that what people do not know gets them into trouble less often than "knowing things which ain't so".

If rumour and gossip had their dangers, they also provided much of the laughter which lightened even the darkest days. One will not easily forget the German lady, recovering from illness, who was advised by her South Carolina doctor to try a less heavy and difficult language until she had regained her strength. The Virginian, R. M. T. Hunter, pleads that, if the Lord is on the side of the Confederacy, as the clergy maintain, "he would show his preference for us a little more plainly than he has been doing so lately". The description of young Johnny Chesnut setting off to enlist as a private, but taking his personal servant with him, encapsulates a good deal of the whole Confederate cause.

The laughter and the tears are a reflection of Mrs Chesnut's engaging, volatile, many-faceted personality. In turn frivolous yet deeply serious, flirtatious and yet profoundly loyal and loving, warm-hearted yet waspish, sharply intelligent yet irrational or even silly, she is always full of surprises and never dull. The charming unpredictability which attracted constant attention and a circle of bright young friends in war-torn Richmond make her compulsively readable over a century later.

Much has been made, too much perhaps, and not least by her present distinguished editor, of her critical comments on Negro slavery, and on the comparably servile status of women. To depict Mary Chesnut as either an abolitionist or a feminist is, however, grossly misleading. Her critique of slavery bites deep but it is written from a standpoint light-years away from Garrison or Wendell Phillips. Indeed some of her harshest words are reserved for those very Yankees who enjoyed the privilege of attacking slavery from a safe distance, in their "nice New England homes – clean, clear, sweet-smelling... Think of these holy New Englanders, forced to have a negro village walk through their houses whenever they saw fit – dirty, slatternly, idle, ill-smelling by nature". If blacks had remained in New England, they would, she argues, not without force, have gone the way of the Indian. This, and many other passages, show how profoundly Mrs Chesnut shared the racial assumptions of her society. "It takes these half-Africans but a moment to go back to their naked, savage animal nature", she commented after coping with a minor domestic crisis. She writes of several of her personal and domestic servants with an affectionate appreciation of their individual personalities. But she mentions only rarely and indirectly the field hands who made up the great bulk of the Chesnut family's slave labour force.

Images of collaboration

By Alistair Horne

DAVID PRYCE-JONES:

Paris in the Third Reich: A History of the German Occupation, 1940-1944
240pp. Collins. £12.50.
0 00 216645 3

Between the launching of Hitler's *Blitzkrieg* in May 1940 and the bloodless occupation of Paris on June 14, there elapsed only thirty-five days. Paris, unlike Warsaw, had not been bombed and, because the Panzers by-passed it in their drive for the Channel ports, the city had seen virtually nothing of the war. So with the arrival of the first, *sehr korrekt*, Germans after the months of uncertainty and the agony of defeat, "a kind of euphoria reigned". For some Parisians (like the dotty Drien and the even dottier Céline) who thought the only thing wrong with the Nazi occupation was that it wasn't brutal enough, the euphoria continued right to the end of the war (especially the Jewish population) it was swiftly to become a nightmare, but for the majority of Parisians – so David Pryce-Jones tells us – it became simply a contest to maintain the most plausible semblance of "Business as Usual".

The brutal suddenness with which the Occupation descended was doubtless one reason why in Paris, in contrast to most of the other occupied capitals of Europe, Hitler's most found existing organizations ready to collaborate with them, all the way, from 1940 until the Liberation in 1944. Another reason might have been the Cartesian tidy-mindedness natural to the French bureaucracy. The notion of a sinister Fifth Column, implanted by skilful *Abwehr* operators, was of course an absurd myth. Collaboration had its genesis back in 1934, in the street-fighting between the thugs of the *Camille* and the *Camille* du *Rin* on the one hand, and the thugs of the Left, on the other, and in the slogans of *philos* *Hitler que Blum*. Out of it all emerged such figures as Marcel Déat and Jacques Doriot, dreadful *faux camille*, of whom Doriot, leader of the PPF, had learnt his trade as a Communist; the rather more tragic figure of Damand, a much-decorated old soldier who had turned to Fascism as a panacea against the corruption of the Third Republic; Brasillach, editor of the right-wing and wildly antisemitic *Je s'élève*, *parvenu*, founded in the early 1930s; and the *faux* *faux* fanatics – men such as Jean Fautouy (who at least had the decency to die fighting with the Waffen SS near Hitler's bunker in Berlin), and Robert Soulat who, dug out by David Pryce-Jones, admitted that he was "in it right up to my neck" and who ended the war (also with the Waffen SS) in Pomerania.

All these personalities were duped and used – but never trusted – by the Nazis, who cunningly encouraged rivalry between the various factions, so that there could be no single rallying point for dissent. Most of these leading French Fascists were executed in the *épuration* that followed the Liberation, which, Pryce-Jones notes, for the Parisians was "in some ways more painful than what the Germans had done to them". Estimates of the number of summary executions range from 30,000 to 105,000, with a hundred thousand arrested in Paris alone. These compare with totals of Frenchmen executed by the Nazis, which vary from 1,500 (in Paris alone) to 29,600 for the whole of France. The figures, however, must be open to question; similar statistics for other episodes of modern French history are notoriously unreliable. Pryce-Jones contrasts the situation in Warsaw, a city one-third the size of Paris, where 166,000 Poles died before it was finally liberated. The difference was that Warsaw fought, and was destroyed; but the Poles saved their souls. Paris collaborated and was spared. The author who in general is severe on the Parisians, implies that they had not much soul to lose even before the Germans arrived.

Paris in the Third Reich is built

around a collection of what appear to be previously unpublished photographs of the period by Roger Schall and André Zuccini. The captions are pedestrian, but the illustrations themselves are historical documents of the utmost fascination. One could have wished for more at the expense of parts of the text. There are shots, taken in unguarded moments, of German officers, parading at Auteuil and Longchamp races, accompanied by hard-faced blondes, and of young troops smirking at nude sculptures in the Louvre. There is a mordant contrast between Luftwaffe officers knocking in to the Grand Palais, and an almost Dickensian scene of soup being doled out in a French kindergarten. There are the eternal pretty girls, doing their best to be chic on wooden heels, and elegant ladies pumping up bicycle tyres with hammers strapped to their carriers.

On the whole, however, the Parisian faces, generally in quest of food, are stunted and unsmiling; a frightened-looking Edith Piaf peers out of a train window on the *metro*. There are scenes of streets empty except for *fiacres*, or man-powered *velo-taxi* (paying for custom outside Maxim's ("Business as Usual") – for those who could afford it. At uniformed rallies of the PPF, the Hitler salutes of Doriot and his followers look somehow ridiculous and deceptively undangerous, while the huge anti-Masonic exhibition held in the Petit Palais is reminiscent of the equally absurd Museum of Anti-Religion in present-day Leningrad. Three photographs, in particular, stand out, by virtue of their ingenuity and evocativeness. One is a broken portrait of the aged Marshal Pétain, surrounded by shoes in a drug shop window; another an underdressed, bespectacled German soldier – the very antithesis of the *Herrenvolk* – painting in Montmartre, under the patronizing scrutiny of the *indigènes*. Best of all is a photograph taken in August 1944 at the barricades, where a man in a pin-striped suit and wearing a *polka-dot* helmet appears alongside a woman in a *polka-dot* dress with an oversized German helmet on her head.

Had David Pryce-Jones matched his text more closely with these admirable photographs, much better book might have emerged. As it is, it lacks balance and tries to combine too many different themes in a restricted compass. Some of them – such as the role of the SOE and the German withdrawal from Paris – have been fully treated elsewhere. The more general subject of Vichy, to which Pryce-Jones devotes an undue amount of space, has also been explored in depth, and to better effect, by writers such as Robert A. Paxton. One of the most interesting parts of the book is the long appendix of interviews with German and French survivors, but this too adds to the overall imbalance. So does the epilogue, an account of the author's attendance at the Heinrich Himmler trial in Cologne in 1979, which hardly seems to belong here at all; while Pryce-Jones's passionate evocation of the whole appalling saga of the Paris Jews threatens to burst right out of the book.

Pryce-Jones is haunted by the image of a Jewish child's hand, seen wringing desperately through the bars of a cattle truck on the long last journey to Auschwitz, until struck by a French policeman, and he rightly does not spare the Parisians who were responsible even by silent assent. In the 1930s, the French Right had the worst record of antisemitism of any country in Western Europe, and when the Nazis arrived they were not slow to seize their opportunities. The first trials for Auschwitz left in March 1942; 75,721 Jews were deported, and 3,000 survived. The scene during the *Grande Rafle*, where whole families were rounded up and herded into the *Vel d'Hiv*, in atrocious conditions, for onward transmission to the staging concentration camp at Drancy, were among the worst of the whole Occupation. Generally, the Parisians seem to

have turned a blind eye, if they didn't actually applaud; there was better behaviour among German-like Captain Ernst Junger (his writings, incidentally, remain among the best to emerge from the whole period) who declared himself "ashamed to be in uniform" when he saw Jews in Paris wearing their *galles* stars. Although even the Jewish community had its sordid corners inhabited by turncoats and profiteers, one's eye is caught by the vignette of *débrouillard* courage of the *mine* star, smoking a cigar while bicycling down the Champs-Élysées, with its explanation – "This is not the moment to hide one's light under a bushel".

David Pryce-Jones is also unsparing of *Le Tout Paris* who collaborated – like the tiresome Louise de Villemorin who was nicknamed *Lou-Lou* (not *Lulu*) the Pompadour, though later rehabilitated (and seduced by Duff Cooper – or whose affluence enabled them to continue gizzling. "In times like these", observed Ernst Junger, "to eat well and to eat a lot gives a feeling of power." Writers too receive the lash, but it is wrong to go on writing, especially when the war seemed without end, or was it merely wrong to publish, thereby automatically requiring Nazi approval? Some surprising figures are quoted to suggest that many took the latter course; in 1943, 9,348 titles were published in France compared with 8,230 in the United States. The author is particularly scathing about the Sartre-de Beauvoir clique, gossiping away in the Florentine and the philosophy of Existentialism that was to bedazzle a whole generation. Sartre, we are told, supported the CNE – a writers' body "dominated by Communists and fellow travellers less interested in resistance than in drawing up lists of other writers and journalists whom they would proscribe and silence after the war". Simone de Beauvoir bemoaned the fact that "politically we found ourselves reduced to a condition of total impotence"; their friend, Albert Camus, however, avoided such impotence by joining the Resistance.

Who were the worst? Apart from the Parisians who sold out the Jews, perhaps the worst were the *gauchistes*, or weathercocks: the "collaborators" and black-marketers who saved their skins by switching to the Resistance at the last moment. I always remember a French friend, a heroine of the Resistance who survived three years in Ravensbrück, telling me how – briefly – she had turned Communist on her return, out of nausea at the spectacle of the *bourgeois* *gauchistes* and *petits fonctionnaires*, all *gironettes* or *résistants* *d'arrière* *moment*, busily decaying each other. But there were always, like her, the heroic Parisians of *true* Resistance; Mr Pryce-Jones does not perhaps say enough about them. And, at the end of this sad tale, Englishmen could do well to ask themselves the question "what would I have done?"

American Government and Politics by Allen M. Potter, Peter Fotheringham, and James G. Kellas (363pp. Faber. £9.50. Paperback, £3.95. 0 571 18044 2) is a third and revised edition of a book which was originally published in 1955 with Allen M. Potter as its sole author. The first chapter, on "The American Scene" does not spare the "The Growth of the American Democracy", "The Making of Present-day America", "The Nation" and "The States". The book continues with chapters on "The Constitution", "Federalism", "The Electoral System" (with sections on the "Size and Complexity of the Electoral System", "Presidential Elections", "The Congressional System", "The Suffrage", and "Campaign Financing"), "Election and Voting", "Political Parties", "The President", "The Courts and the Law", "The Supreme Court and Civil Liberties", and an Appendix containing The Constitution of the United States.

C. A. MACDONALD:

The United States, Britain and Appeasement 1936-1939
220pp. Macmillan. £15.
0 333 261 690

The relations between the Great Powers in the 1930s were, perhaps more than at any other time since the French Revolution, conditioned by ideology. On the one side there stood the three "liberal democracies" of France, Britain (together with the Dominions) and the United States. On the other there lurked the "revisionist" fascist states of Germany, Italy and Japan. Standing apart from each group was a Soviet Union following political principles which rejected both parliamentary democracy and fascism. The overall context within which foreign affairs was conducted was, therefore, markedly different from the era of *Kühnheitspolitik*, under Bismarck or Sir Edward Grey.

One should not conclude from this, of course, that the international crisis of the 1930s arose solely from ideological disagreements. The internal politics of the different states, not to mention their historical traditions and geographical situations, conditioned attitudes towards foreign policy and pushed countries against each other. So, too, did the economic pecking-order, and whether a nation considered itself to be a "have" or a "have-not" within that order.

Nonetheless, these more usual causes for antagonism were underpinned by, and made sharper by, conflicting ideologies. There can be no doubt of the fascist leaders' scorn for the older liberal beliefs, nor of the mutual distaste shown towards the dictator regimes by western statesmen as varied as Roosevelt, Hull, Chamberlain, Churchill, Daladier, Bonnet, and many others. And the more that dreifend decade unfolded, the more evident became this clash of political values. Even diplomats whose task it was to minimize differences between states, and to negotiate if need be with the Devil, admitted as much.

If this was so, if in essence a Manichean divide existed between the forces of "good" and those of "evil", why were the former unable to coordinate their resistance to the world-wide fascist threat? After all, the dictators for their part often seemed to be acting in conjunction:

formal proclamations of an "axis" or a tripartite pact were interspersed by informal, but no less threatening, acts of coordination – witness Abyssinia and the Rhineland, Prague and Albania, Tientsin and Danzig. Even if the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo connection was not as tight as it appeared to be, it compared favourably with the muddled, often uncoordinated policies of the three democracies, each of which tugged in different directions, occasionally weakening and undermining the efforts of one another. By standing firmly together they might still not have deterred the "revisionist" powers from aggression (except, probably, Italy); but they could well have made the early years of the Second World War less disastrous for themselves.

Throughout the inter-war years, for example, London and Paris repeatedly quarrelled with each other over how to handle the German question; yet geographical proximity, and the shared dangers, gradually pushed them closer as the 1930s developed. Reluctant partners they might have been, but at least they entered the war as allies. The really uncoordinated, disjointed relationship was that between Washington and London, and this important theme is the subject of C.A. MacDonald's book *The United States, Britain and Appeasement 1936-1939*.

Making particularly good use of the private papers of Chamberlain and Roosevelt, as well as of the State Department, Foreign Office and Cabinet records, the author has produced a solid account of Anglo-American diplomatic relations during the three years preceding the outbreak of war.

The book is not, as its title might perhaps suggest, a comparative study of American and British appeasement, and of the forces which influenced that policy – the military, public opinion, and so on. Essentially a diplomatic narrative, its main theme can be summarized as "How Roosevelt tried to manoeuvre the British into a proper policy towards the dictators"; that key word "proper" being subject, of course, only to American definition. From Washington's viewpoint, the fractured globe could only be restored to health again by the application of traditional liberal economic principles – an open world order, the end of exclusive trading arrangements, and free access to raw materials. This "package", whilst benefiting American business most of all, would also bring about a general prosperity, thus undercutting the appeals of right-wing extremists and giving the

Waiting for Uncle Sam

By Paul Kennedy

"moderates" in Germany (especially) and Japan the chance to regain control. If the fascist leaders opposed such ideas, preferring autarky, arms and aggression to international harmony, they would be exposed and the world opinion would consolidate itself against them. In addition, isolationist Americans would at last pull their heads out of the sand and see the globe as it really was.

But the most remarkable feature of this American strategy was that it should be, not the United States, but Britain, which took the lead in lessening world tensions and, by extension, in standing firm against the dictators. If the policy failed, London's diplomacy therefore had to be controlled – for its own good, to be sure – by Washington. This was a role, however, which Neville Chamberlain resolutely declined to play. Being pushed forward into an exposed position by Uncle Sam was, in his eyes, far too risky. If the strategy failed, the Empire might face the impossible task of defending itself against three revisionist powers, and with no guarantee of American military aid (given the Neutrality Act) economic aid. What Chamberlain instead needed was to "buy off" Berlin by reasonable economic and territorial concessions, thus breaking the *Axis bloc* and in this way strengthening the hand of the German "moderates".

In any case, the Prime Minister had no wish to see the British Empire become politically dependent upon the United States, for that might ultimately mean the end of imperial preference. Hence his own, dogged, independent efforts at the appeasement of Germany – restrained only to the extent that it was necessary to appear friendly to the United States, so as to worry the dictators and avoid criticism from the pro-American circles in Britain.

The result of all this can easily be imagined. Chamberlain's appeasement policy, especially the Munich concessions but also the Anglo-German trade negotiations, caused irritation and suspicion among Roosevelt and his advisors. The British, they felt, were up to tricks. They appeared neither to subscribe to the open world economic order, despite its God-given precepts, nor did they shrink from cowardly surrenders of other countries' territories to Hitler. Yet as the international scene worsened, it became even more necessary for Washington to encourage London, by a carrot-and-stick policy, to do its duty. Sometimes, therefore, the two nations (with anxious French approval) did manage

to cooperate – over the Far East by 1939, or in their eventual policy towards Mussolini. But more often than not Anglo-American relations were marred by disagreement over the timing, purposes and the methods of handling the dictators. Such mutual suspicions were increasingly personified in those two radically different politicians, Roosevelt and Chamberlain, and even in the late summer of 1939 the former suspected that the Prime Minister was planning to "take a bludge" on the Poles. As for Chamberlain, one suspects that he never really altered his 1937 conviction that it was "always best and safest to count on nothing from the Americans except words".

The United States, Britain and Appeasement 1936-1939 is a most detailed and useful account of a political three-legged race in which the partners, professing heading towards the same general goal of world peace and prosperity, were nearly always out of step and not infrequently tripping each other up.

Such weaknesses as exist in MacDonald's book derive chiefly from the approach he has chosen. Having new and valuable archival sources to exploit, he has tended to stay rather too close to the documents. A more story is not set in its larger context at the beginning, and the conclusion, although it makes some useful points, is simply too short to deal with the bigger questions which this subject provokes. No attempt is made to assess, for example, how realistic the rival strategies were: after all, since both Roosevelt and Chamberlain sought, in their different ways, to aid the so-called German "moderates", does not any judgment of the viability of their policies require more reference to the German side, and to the newer German literature? Do not the subjective assessments that the President and the Prime Minister made of each other need measuring against the historical record? Further, is there not a need, in some place in the book, for a fuller analysis of the constraints (economic weakness, pressure from the Dominions, the rise of Labour etc) placed upon any British government that sought to carry out the "forward" policy promoted by Roosevelt? Only when those considerations are checked against the claim (made here by MacDonald, but elsewhere by Maurice Cowling) that Chamberlain pursued appeasement in order to avoid a future *Pax Americana*, can we properly begin to assess the priority of motives in the Prime Minister's strategy. Such

criticisms should not detract from the solid worth of MacDonald's study, but should serve to remind us of the framework within which his researches will need to be placed.

The strong impression remains that we continue to lack a proper measure of where the United States stood in the world "system" during the late 1930s. This gap is not a novel discovery; scholars like Donald Watt and Christopher Thorne have made the point before, but it needs to be reiterated. American historians of the period have rarely considered their country's international position (as opposed to its foreign policy); and non-Americans have tended to focus upon events in Europe, or the Far East. There are good reasons for such decisions, but in some ways the result has been like *Hanau* without the Prince. Even at that time, the United States was the greatest power in the world. Its financial strength had underpinned war-torn Europe in the 1920s, and then disrupted it after 1929. By the eve of war, American productive strength was, at a rough estimate, at least twice that of Great Britain, three times that of France, five times that of Japan, and almost ten times that of Germany. As the price of rearmament ticked up, it alone seemed to be able to reconcile military ends with financial means. Without American support, as everyone (Chamberlain, Hitler, the French) knew, neither Britain nor France could sustain another long war.

Yet despite this economic preponderance, this vast magnetic force influencing and distorting the traditional fields of force, the United States avoided the leadership role. It was powerful yet unpredictable, a presence brooding behind the curtains whilst the minor actors (measured by their military staying-power, at least) performed in the centre of the stage. Neither London nor Paris could be unaffected by its moods. In Berlin, it now seems clear, Hitler was resolved to unify Europe under German authority before, as he saw it, a future American domination of the world. In Rome and Tokyo, too, the leadership tried to assess what American reactions would be to their own planned moves. Yet no one in the United States, not even Roosevelt, could tell what Washington's policy would be; that is, how far the public would allow the President to go. It was, and still remains to historians, a most curious international situation, and one which calls out for further analysis and reflection if we are to get that troubled decade correctly in focus.

sources to win through by a margin."

This, though undoubtedly true, highlights one of the failures of Weigley's book. Eisenhower's broad-front strategy meant that the Russians – not the Allies, won the Second World War in Europe – yet the Russians are nowhere to be seen – or heard of – in these pages. He is too hard, also, on Bradley and too soft on Eisenhower. By quoting brief extracts from Eisenhower's papers, he tries to show him as an astute planner, strategist and even, on occasion, tactician. This may well have been the case – yet it belies the real failure of Eisenhower's "administration" in the campaign, which was one of command. But for the progress of the Russians in the East there can be no doubt that Eisenhower would, like Joffre, have been removed. Bradley was probably the best infantry commander America has produced since the Civil War, and he should not be blamed for Eisenhower's failure to provide proper generalship in the field. Only in the case of the final *opéra bouffe* in South Germany – the Nazi "redoubt" – does Weigley really point the finger at Eisenhower, and even then he manages to shift part of the opprobrium onto Bradley.

The chief defect of this book is its lack of proper maps. Those provided are a disgrace in what is a serious work of military history.

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Battlefield strategy

By Nigel Hamilton

RUSSELL F. WEGLEY:

Eisenhower's Lieutenant: The Campaigns of France and Germany 1944-1945
800pp. Sidgwick and Jackson.
£12.50.
0 283 98801 0

This is, purely and simply, a book about the American army. From the very start Russell Weigley's power of synthesis, his control of narrative and his balanced judgment are in evidence, and his setting of the American background to the Normandy campaign is admirably lucid, concise and authoritative. "The American army's two principal heritages from the past were also conflicting legacies," Weigley observes. "The memory of the Western border was suggested that the primary military value is sheer power." General U.S. Grant's great blue army corps smothering the gray legions of R.E. Lee under the weight of their weapons and numbers. To reiterate: mobility and power, not the central problem of the transformation of the old American

army of the frontier to the new army of European war."

Once the European battles start, however, Professor Weigley has difficulties. Why does he ignore the preliminary campaigns in North Africa and Sicily, as well as the simultaneous American campaign in Italy? The trouble is that he is too honest an investigator. He wishes to give the reader a fair account of the American army's performance under fire ("a day's trial by battle often reveals more of the essential nature of an army than a generation of peace") and thus commits himself to a laborious recitation of the American army's progress from Normandy to the Elbe, division by division, corps by corps, army by army. Somehow, such painstaking reconstruction tends to make one feel that events followed an inevitable course, and Weigley's broad-front approach mirrors, so to speak, the very failings of the campaign he chronicles – and so rightly criticizes.

Yet for anyone with the time to read it, this is an absorbing survey of the campaign in North-West Europe. Surprisingly, Field-Marshal Montgomery turns out to be his star. Contradicting the usual Anglo-American view of Montgomery as an excessively slow and cautious general, Weigley sees him as the only

commander who possessed both the ability to face German opponents in all-out frontal fighting and a bold, imaginative battlefield strategy.

The source of all evil for Weigley was the placing of the American army on the right of its British counterpart, for, lacking the manpower resources of the United States, the British were forced to husband their troops and were unwilling to risk them in a do-or-die breakout and envelopment of the enemy. If only the American army had been given the Cien-Falaise sector, Weigley argues, history might have been very different, and the war might have ended in 1944. With their superior manpower, and a tradition of both head-on infantry attack as well as frontier cavalry manoeuvre, the Americans could have broken out from the coast, raced to Brussels and Antwerp, across the Rhine and on to Berlin, with the British guarding their right flank.

Instead, as Weigley chronicles, the war followed a very different pattern. Montgomery's strategy in Normandy (his real strategy, not his later "all well according to plan" version) was defeated by German resistance, and the Bocage in front of the Americans. The eventual result was COBRA – the American break-

out from the Bocage which ended the stalemate but sent Patton off in the wrong direction, and – together with the arrival of Dava's unwanted army from the Mediterranean – introduced the broad-front principle to Eisenhower's headquarters. For this, Weigley argues, the American army was not suitably equipped, either in tanks or in men.

Its only answer to this was Patton. If military preponderance was not forthcoming, then superior mobility and aggressiveness would provide the solution. But the Germans were too good to permit such mobility and manoeuvre unless they had first been beaten in the field.

So Weigley turns to Montgomery as the one commander with the experience, the vision and the language to inspire the Allies to victory. Poor Bradley – who must have been still alive when Weigley was writing this book – comes out a sorry figure, as does the intemperate Hodges. The battle of the Huertgen Forest is written off as a dreadful mistake and, altogether, Weigley argues, it was a miracle the Allies ever got into Germany. "Employing a broad-front strategy to overwhelm the enemy by weight of resources all along the Western Front, the U.S. paradoxical had mobilized just enough re-

Elias Canetti

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By John Hope Mason

The Hypochondriac
Olivier Theatre

Le Malade Imaginaire is a curious hotchpotch of a play, in which time-worn comic devices and routines are mixed with serious comedy of character and a number of musical interludes. Molière had used the combination of spoken scene and musical interlude very successfully in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, but in this play the two elements are not well-matched. Pastoral habits in praise of Louis XIV, or Egyptians dressed as Mourners singing the pleasures of youth, do not add a great deal to the domestic drama of health-obsessed monomania and frustrated young love. It is difficult not to feel that the work was thrown together in haste.

Despite this unevenness, however, the play had a big success when first performed and it has remained one of Molière's most popular comedies. This is due principally to the character of Argan, the hypochondriac. For

not only is his obsession the driving force of the play, it is also a broad, grand, comprehensive obsession. Unlike Argan in *Tartuffe* (with whom he is sometimes compared) or Harpagon in *L'Avare*, Argan suffers from a delusion which we can easily understand and, to a certain extent, find sympathetic. Indeed, from housewives on Vitamin to health-freaks on multi-vitamins, theatre audiences must be full of potential Argans.

There is, too, the fact that this was Molière's last play. He was ill when he wrote it and he died shortly after the fourth performance. This gives an extra dimension to the play. Attacks on doctors, like attacks on lawyers, pedants and other self-styled experts, are standard comic fare, and had often been used as such by Molière. *Le Malade Imaginaire* contains its staple amount of this material. But in the long third-act scene between Argan and his brother Bérault, Molière treats the subject in a completely different way; it is this scene that makes the play less about doctors than about hypochondria, the obsessive need for doctors. Bérault wants to rid Argan of his obsession and he reasons with him patiently and good-humouredly.

It is an indication of what is wrong with the National Theatre production that the reference to "inquietude" has been cut. For this is a production which has no centre to it. Daniel Massey is endearing as Argan but he lacks any inner compulsion, anxiety or fear. He enjoys his obsession but we feel he could do without it; it is like a harmless hobby, a pet fad. As a result his obstinacy seems no more than bad temper, childish tantrums or an old man's willfulness. The play is thus deprived of its essential dynamic; the audience are not drawn into the crazy world which this character inhabits. There is no

development from the inner disorder of Argan's imagination to the external knockabout that ensues. Indeed the knockabout seems gratuitous.

The cast work hard to overcome this central deficiency in the production, though they are not helped by the hackneyed nature of much of the business they are given. There is a brilliant cameo performance by Michael Fenner as Thomas Diafoirus, but generally it is not the comedy parts but the straight characters who come across best - Anna Cartaret as Argan's wife, Michael Bryant as the brother, and Emily Morgan and Clive Arrindell, who are excellent as the young lovers. The difficult scene of Angelique finding her father dead, then alive, and then her renunciation of marriage, is well handled.

The director, Michael Bogdanov, has reworked much of the musical scenes, expanding the reference to Carnival so that the whole play is set in a Carnival framework. This is a good idea, but it has not been realized with enough invention to make it convincing. The translation by Alan Drury has a few lapses, some good touches, and is generally fluent and efficient.

For to admire an' for to see

By Peter Kemp

In the Eye of the Sun
Gate Theatre

The title of John Clegg's one-man show - which sadly ends its short run at the Gate on November 7 - comes from a Kipling poem, enthusiastically hailing "the sights and the sounds and the smells / That ran with our youth in the eye of the sun". Splendidly, the evening stirs these back to life as it displays the sensuous prodigality of Kipling's response to India.

The set is extremely simple: wicker furniture, writing utensils, a decanter and a pipe, a few books with covers as red as British possessions on a nineteenth-century map. Uncannily resembling the Kipling of the Philip Burne-Jones portrait, John Clegg walks and talks around these items, using Kipling's words - poems, stories, fragments of autobiography - to build up a mosaic of the Raj.

Clegg's opening manoeuvres are perhaps a bit pell-mell. After fleeting glimpses of Kipling's Bombay childhood home, we are whisked to Southsea and the dreary house whose "aridity and emptiness" did so much to fertilize his imagination by making it receptive to India. Lightning school-days follow, and a rapid passage book: Kipling seems hardly arrived at Westward Hol before he's eastward bound. Then, as he reaches Lahore, where he starts to write, the pace slackens and Clegg's performance really gets into its stride.

His material, skillfully selected and sometimes discreetly edited, demonstrates the variety of writing India's diversity provoked from Kipling. Not all aspects are equally represented. Happily, the *Just So Stories* - those pieces of Anglo-Indian proto-Disney supply only one extract. More surprisingly, the tales of hill-station high-jinks and philandering under the deodars are completely bypassed. Mrs Hauksbee gets cold-shouldered. What Clegg concentrates on is writing that memorably evokes the sights and sounds of India: its pleasures and its pains. As he moves through his repertoire, it's striking how many references to the excitement of looking occur. An extract from *Kim* remarks on "new sights at every turn of the approving eye". Elsewhere, Kipling assures his creator, "I saw nought common on Thy Earth" and in "one of the collo-

quial poems, a soldier speaks of his urge "For to admire an' for to see". The selections here triumphantly testify to the power of this impulse.

Kipling's India, from its seifron dawns to its turquoise twilight, is drenched in colour - especially red. Blood, as Clegg's selection shows, wells out from his writing everywhere - spurring, seeping, dripping, and drying under a parching sun into flecked lozenges that curl up into the air like "dumb tongues". Cruelty and pain, Clegg keeps bringing out, are never very far from the tomorrows and temple bells. And Kipling's work is also vitalized by precisely-crafted sounds. His poems can be altered to the faintest evocative murmur - from "the pipe of the split banana-fruit" to "thin, tin, crackling roofs". The prose, too - a neat dove-tailing of passages from *Kim* exemplifies - can be atmospherically

chock-a-block with India's noises: bullocks "chumping", the tinkle of a sitar, squeals and giggles from shuttered pariah-carts, "gurgling, grunting hooks", which in full blast sound like bull-frogs.

Clegg's renderings also point up the importance of the human voice in Kipling's writing. Much of the narrative prose, as he has obviously found and now expertly demonstrates, cries aloud to be spoken. One of Clegg's display pieces is the telling of a ghost story, "The Return of Imray", an exercise in Raj *uncanny* that alternates nerve-plucking between a tone of clubbable stolidity ("we lit tobacco and thought") and gruffly sober understatement ("At the end of an hour he died, as they die who are bitten by the little brown karai").

But Clegg's greatest success, really, is in showing off the emotional

and social variety of the *Barrack-Room Ballads*. Slipping effortlessly in and out of tones and accents, he illustrates how Kipling, at his best, could make the dramatic monologue fall compellingly into step with the ballad. Ranging from dropped-aijehs nostalgia to crowing jubilation about going home, Clegg pleasingly reveals the width of mood.

And he is excellent at refurbishing such staid familiar as "Gunga Din" or "Mandalay", with their pungent compoundings of Cockney and lingo, knowledge and lyricism. As the stage resounds to different dialects, accents, tones, it strikes you what a pity it was that Kipling never channelled his vernacular abilities into writing poems and stories since, can ring with authenticity. *In the Eye of the Sun* offers a fine impersonation of this many-voiced talent. It's worth hurrying to see.

Playing Pound safe

By Paul Driver

The Stage
St John's Smith Square

The muddled life and tragic demise of Ezra Pound have been exercising a number of writers and musicians lately. Earlier this year Bernard Kops's play, *Ezra*, was successfully staged at the New Hall Moon Theatre; subsequently it was adapted for transmission on Radio 3. At a concert in St John's, Smith Square on October 20 the Lontano Ensemble gave the first performance of a cantata, *The Cage*, specially commissioned from Nigel Osborne, which, like Kops's treatment, focuses on the years Pound spent incarcerated in Pisa in a metal cage used for the transportation of grills.

The fact that Pound here composed some of his greatest poetry makes it a uniquely attractive *macabre* scene, one rendered by Kops in lurid, unsparing detail. Nigel Osborne, the other hand, has entirely resisted the temptations of melodrama and expressionism. Whereas Kops's play confined itself to a simulation of Pound's railing and dependency and did not borrow one word of his poetry, Osborne and Whiting have tried to project and analyse Pound's predicament purely through musical highlighting of cru-

cial fragments from the *Pisan Cantos*. No attempt is made to dramatize the figure of Pound in his cage; the tenor soloist stands at the back of the circle of nine instrumentalists and has a strictly impersonal function, often singing in a ritualistic falsetto, subject at times to discreet electronic modulation.

Nor does the text offer any direct reference to Pound's situation. It is a cento of the multi-lingual allusions to world-literature that are freely scattered through the *Pisan Cantos*. Whiting has cleverly condensed 125 pages of verse into a mere twenty-five "touchstone" phrases which convey something of the broken luminosity of the whole. There is a latent narrative progression in the arrangement from stotes of despair to ecstasy to resignation that Nigel Osborne has emphasized in his music. But the work remains an abstract and oblique account of its subject: it is the pure plangency of Pound's situation that is expressed.

The music, though marked by brief, wild outbursts, is surprisingly delicate and cajoling. The instrumentation affords much colour: there is a beautiful oboe d'ore accompaniment to the tenor's line, "Le Paradis n'est pas artificiel, l'enfer non plus"; alto flute, bass clarinet and trumpet make attractive contributions elsewhere. The concluding slow, pianissimo - chorale for the whole ensemble ("Pauvre et ancienne") is a notable invention -

deceptively diatonic, bleak and elegant at the same time. In sound duration (just over fifteen minutes) and technique the score resembles Osborne's recent *Mythologies*, also in Lontano's repertoire. Both employ instrumentalists and have a strictly impersonal function, often singing in a ritualistic falsetto, subject at times to discreet electronic modulation.

Nor does the text offer any direct reference to Pound's situation. It is a cento of the multi-lingual allusions to world-literature that are freely scattered through the *Pisan Cantos*. Whiting has cleverly condensed 125 pages of verse into a mere twenty-five "touchstone" phrases which convey something of the broken luminosity of the whole. There is a latent narrative progression in the arrangement from stotes of despair to ecstasy to resignation that Nigel Osborne has emphasized in his music. But the work remains an abstract and oblique account of its subject: it is the pure plangency of Pound's situation that is expressed.

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A painted bisque porcelain statuette of Johann Nestroy as Sansquarier in *Zwölf Mädchen in Uniform*. It is in the John and Rita Russell Collection of figures from the Viennese theatre, at Harvard. An illustrated article about the collection appears in the Harvard Library Bulletin, July 1981. (Tom Stoppard's adaptation of Nestroy's *Einmal Jux* will be seen at the Rattle, reviewed in *Commentary* on September 11.)

commentary**'Nickleby' in New York**

By Stephen Koss

Poor Nick, always so honest, trusting and unwitting. He might have learnt a lesson from Martin Chuzzlewit or indeed from Dickens himself. Instead, like them, he has continued his "life and adventures" across the Atlantic, where he has fallen into the hands of the sharpers.

His overwhelming success on the London stage certified his quality as a commodity for export. And so, accompanied by 150 characters played by forty-two actors, he came to the Plymouth Theatre on Broadway. His arrival was heralded by a promotional campaign of unprecedented magnitude and utter intercessions. Nichols has been given the big sell as only New York can give it. He deserved better. The production, transported for a fourteen-week season, is gloriously intact. But it has been invested, quite literally, with a new and inappropriate aura which defeats the purpose of the enterprise. For *Nicholas Nickleby* has been packaged as an extravaganza, not an extravaganza. Most offensively, its costliness has been more loudly touted than its merit.

"The experience is priceless", proclaim the posters which replicate the ones used in London. But with a difference. The original background, composed of a dense juxtaposition of Victorian scenes, has been replaced by a field of glistening gold. Indeed, the experience could better be described

American Writers' Congress

By Eva Figes

The American Writers' Congress, the first occasion of its kind for forty years, took place in a blaze of television lights and amid considerable media coverage generally in New York over Columbus weekend, from October 9 to 12. It had been initiated and organized by the *Nation* magazine through its Nation Institute with the help of a grant from the Olmstead Family Foundation, and had taken a year of planning which, judging by the chaos which reigned on the first couple of days, was not enough. The organizers expected 2,500 people to come to the Roosevelt Hotel, but when 5,000 would-be participants turned up on Friday night the doors were shut and fights were reported on 45th Street as a couple of thousand angry writers were turned away. By the next morning, a large town hall a couple of blocks away in mid-Manhattan had been hired to cope with the overflow, but a certain amount of confusion continued on the Saturday as participants milled about between conference rooms, most of which were already jammed to capacity. Papalists had been invited to speak on an enormous range of topics from an agenda that seemed in a constant state of last-minute flux, and my own feeling was that fewer events in larger rooms would have been preferable.

The mood behind the Congress was one of crisis, and its intention was action rather than mere discussion. To quote the opening words of the *Nation's* special issue on the situation of the writer today: "Conglomerate takeovers in the communications industry are nothing new. It is the intersection of the concentration and the New Right that has scared, enraged and begun to transform those who care about the state of the literary art." Congress was also a major issue, with many famous authors now forbidden from school library shelves, and the Reagan Administration planning to modify and emasculate the Freedom of Information Act. And in addition, American writers have problems familiar on this side of the Atlantic:

cuts in government grants to the arts, and marketing techniques which threaten the very existence of the minority writer, the literary novelist and the poet.

The organizers of the Congress had promised action, and apart from a Continuations Committee dedicated to following through motions passed at the Plenary Session, the main focus on the activist front had been the idea of forming a writers' union. I had been invited as a representative from the Writers' Guild of Great Britain to speak on the British experience of union action, and there were several other representatives from writers' unions in Europe - Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Germany.

In fact a great many of the participants were primarily journalists who, with absolutely no equivalent of our NUJ, are highly vulnerable to editorial practices which are almost unheard of in this country. Non-payment, "kill fees" and multiple rewrites figured among their grievances; rather pathetically, a journalist from the *Village Voice* explained how the staff were "allowed" to voice their grievances to management, as though this was a major breakthrough in labour relations. I listened in a state of shock.

As for the idea of forming an American union for writers, this is clearly gathering momentum. Achievements that seem minimal to European writers sounded almost Utopian to American participants, who were dazzled by the concept of Public Lending Right, amazed at the idea of belonging to an organization that would protect you from publishers who attempted to break their contracts. The information I was able to give them of the British experience of book writers' collective action over the past decade was of particular value, since we share not only a common language but many of the same problems. It struck me that the American writers' situation was very much what ours had been ten years ago, and that they could profit from our experience. Those who came to listen clearly felt the same way: the resolution to endorse the formation of a national writers' union was passed to prolonged and enthusiastic applause.

By making the experience so expensive to obtain (twenty cents per minute, it has been reckoned), the New York management has obviously exploited the production for its snob appeal. "You are about to spend more money for a theatre ticket than you ever thought possible", say the advertisements. "You get what you pay for", intones the same radio announcer who tremulously implores listeners to patronize the Metropolitan Opera in order to "give a blow for civilization". Without considering the effect upon household budgets, parents are advised that "no civilized family can deny the pleasure to its children".

To a limited extent, the campaign has caught on. Those who have paid the price boast a certain chic, unobtainable from the Masterpiece Theatre and other private anglophile additions. The reviewers have lent their support: "Skip a mortgage payment, pawn the children", one of them recommended, "but see *Nicholas Nickleby*". But on sports on select handbags and lapels, depicting Roger Rees's head, shoulders, and clenched fist, along with the inscription "I Was Nicked". The double entendre is intentional and itself a pointed commentary. In a town where the byword used to be "I can get it for you wholesale", it has become a mark of cultural status to have been gaily ripped-off. Better to be mugged at the box

office, so to speak, than on the subway.

On Sunday, October 4, the day before the formal opening and before the reviews were in, the *New York Times* provided its readers with "a guide to seeing *Nicholas Nickleby*" that explained the complexities of booking procedures and offered some further guidance. "To enhance enjoyment, one should read, or re-read, the original novel", now available in a new and more expensive paperback edition. Patrons were told how and where to scramble for refreshment in the fifty-five-minute pause between parts of the eight-and-a-half hour whole, a break in "the Dickensian banquet on stage". The following morning, however, the paper accorded *Nickleby* a studiously tempered reception. "We get an outsize event that sometimes seems in search of a shape", wrote Frank Rich, who wildly mixed his metaphors. "While the high points . . . are Himalayan indeed, they are separated by dull passages which clog the production's arteries". The problem, it was asserted, lay with the adaptation. Perhaps Mr Rich should have consulted that paperback.

There were initial fears that ticket sales would suffer from the *Times's* all-important review, which suggested that the required sacrifices in time and money were excessive. Surely they were not helped by the appearance of a full-page advertisement, two pages later in the same issue, which announced that the Mobil Oil Corporation would soon be sponsoring a four-part telecast of the Royal Shakespeare Company's production, complete with narration by Peter Ustinov. Those who hesitate to skip their mortgage payments and pawn their children can sit at home and wait.

Viewers watching either American Public Broadcasting or the British fourth channel will miss the scope and flow of the stage production and inevitably much of the boisterous liveliness along the sidelines. The performance, particularly its second instalment, has been effectively litigated since I saw it early in its London run. Roger Rees has wonderfully preserved his air of sympathetic bemusement, Suzanne Bertish her vivacious versatility, and John Woodvine his mercantile gravitas. Lila Kaye, who was reported to have made the crossing by sea, is still more slyly captivating. The pivotal role of Smike has been restored to David Threlfall, who created it: Ben Kingsley, however, was more successful than his lumbering successor in conveying the leering malice of Squeers.

The Plymouth offers a more compact auditorium than the triple-decked Aldwych, though its neo-classical décor detracts from the atmosphere before the lights dim. That, to be sure, is the least of *Nickleby's* disadvantages. It may be doubted whether any production could live up to the reputation of being the theatrical event of the decade, much less the theatrical event of a lifetime. *Nicholas Nickleby* has also had to live up to - or possibly live down - the glare of its local publicity. John Caird, one of its co-directors, confessed his misgivings to an interviewer. The presentation, as it had evolved, was "truly representative of our view that the theatre is popular, accessible and hospitable for all sections of society". Yet the uniform price for a double admission in New York, almost five times the price of two choice seats in London, puts the experience beyond the reach of a vast potential audience which lacks the affluence to matter. If nothing else, this goes flatly against the spirit of Dickens and that of the RSC as well.

"You get what you pay for" - half a promise, half a commercial admonition, and wholly spurious as an artistic principle - was the materialist philosophy of Nicholas's Uncle Ralph. At the risk of giving away the plot, it may be recalled that he himself got nicked in the end, and without so much as a souvenir button to show for it.

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Oxford University Press

commentary

De bello Triffido

By T. A. Shippey

The Day of the Triffids
BBC TV

John Wyndham had the available if surprising habit (for a man who won his spurs in pulp magazines) of centring his later and most successful stories on Latin tags. *The Midwich Cuckoos* ends with Gordon Zellaby intoning *Si fueris Romae, Romani vultus more* (sublimely and all), while the key phrase for *The Day of the Triffids* is Fulham's *Chevron in patria laurus res imperant omnia* — "In the country of the blind the one-eyed man is king". In Wyndham's book this is furthermore only an excuse for a seminar on the meaning of *patria*, not "country" so much as "organized State", the thing that the new imagined blind world has pre-eminently lost. But it must have been obvious from very much earlier to Douglas Livingstone, adapting Wyndham's book for the BBC TV serial, that all this kind of thing had got to go. Was there enough left?

The point is that for all its moving, man-eating plants and retina-burning rays, *The Day of the Triffids* is a novel of argument, not action; and the argument is about, first, whether "survival of the fittest" is the only law, and second, whether there is any ethical belief that remains valid under all circumstances. Are the triffids Super-beings? They don't look it, but if you asked a tiger to design the next stage of evolution it would probably think in terms of longer teeth and faster acceleration. Our notion that Supermen ought to have bigger brains could be just as unimaginatively parochial. Perhaps the next step — so Wyndham suggested — could be in terms of simplicity. To survive, a man needs food, clothes, shelter, fire, sanitation, government, a *patria*. . . All a triffid needs is its sting. That could make it "fitter". Better? As for the point about ethics, in the book a key scene is the lecture by a professor of sociology to the few sighted people left, on the theme of *autres temps, autres moeurs* and the relativity of ethics — leading to the assertion that blind women post-catastrophe are primarily baby-factories. Around it lie a string of

scenes in which people escape from, or succumb to, the fatal grasp of ethical conservatism, the belief that "what's right's right".

The serial in fact kept a great deal of this with astonishing and praiseworthy fidelity. But arguments, debates and most of all explanations are just not visual. What was Livingstone to do? He solved his problem of scene-setting in episode 1 by left use of flashback and of the cassette recorder — one of several neat adaptations of the 1951 book — for Bill Masen to dictate his thoughts and memories to. After that, TV's strong card was the visual impact of familiar scenes turning wild and threatening, like a paranoid's dream. The toothall supporters shouting "I want a woman" are pretty everyday. The shock-turning-to-gratification of the one who gets one — because she's blind and his mate still has eyes — removes the sportive veneer from it very thoroughly. Hands groping for door handles, the adroit use of moral blackmail to turn kindness into an expensive vice; all this made the "breakdown of civilization" sequences even more convincing and economical.

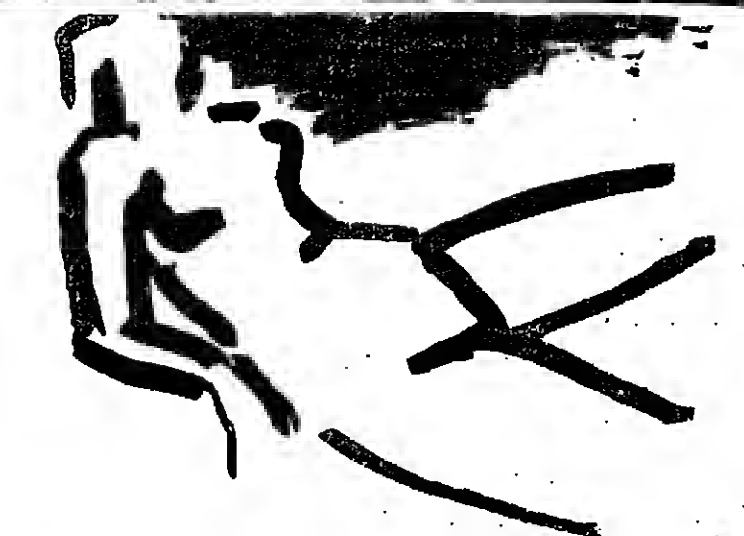
The triffids themselves were harder, and yet they are the crucial factor in the plot. *Day of the Triffids*, like *War of the Worlds*, is about species-conflict, and not just (like John Christopher's *Death of Grass*, for instance) about how people throw off their inhibitions under strain. Without the triffids, John Wyndham's plot would turn into a kind of pastoral. The serial perhaps edged in this direction. England seemed to get unutterably very quickly and rather tidily. Not many bodies lying in the streets; very few shrieks and wails in the night; a distinct Robinson Crusoe element of riding supermarkets, and a very Habitat feel to the last scene in the taken-over farmhouse. If the country were really overrun by the equivalent of intelligent king cobras, one would expect more of a sense of strain.

As it was, one excruciatingly nagging aspect of the serial was the way the characters strolled about. They ambled up to high-sided lorries which could have concealed the approach of whole platoons of triffids; they stood round winking torches in the middle of the night. If triffids were real, one would have expected a lot of nervous inquiry as to whether they were ever

nocturnal. But Livingstone and the director, Ken Hannam, did not get their cast to show constant tension. Maybe the wish-fulfillment side of the plot ("in the country of the blind the two-eyed man can have anything he likes") just proved too strong.

This is not to carp about the actors, who to a naïve literary eye seemed well cast. John Outtine got just the note of earnest bearded worth for Bill Masen; Maurice Colbourne gave Jack Coker exactly his specified role as a "sensible chap with chip on his shoulder" (and with a good reason for it). It was a good idea to move Emma Relp as Jo from short hair and slight mannishness in the first five episodes to long hair and clearer sex-revelation in the last. Gary Olsen as Torrence was convincingly offish at the end: though once again it seemed a slightly anachronistic notion to have this ruthless citizen rebelling on about feudalism and "ve abnoxious social and economic structure for ve circumstances" post-Apocalypse. One would have thought that in a real catatony the "Citizen Smith" rhetoric would have been an early casualty. In the novel, Torrence, though he does say something very like that, says it harder and then tells the Masen household they'll have to start eating mashed tidlet. Too tough, maybe, for a mid-evening audience.

But then science fiction is usually a hard-boiled genre, especially with large doses of Orwell added, and commonly has to be toned down, if not doctored, for the general reader or viewer. *The Midwich Cuckoos*, for instance, came out a good deal less rapidly, from its inception new title on, as the MGM film *Village of the Damned*. The BBC at least resisted nearly all temptations in that direction, and can hardly be faulted for playing what visual cards they had: empty London streets, close-ups of flesh, sticky stings, computer simulation for the bolts from the triffid guns. Still, for all the proverbs to the contrary, words do convey information faster than pictures; perhaps especially if you give them in Latin and then add a not-quite-right English translation. Zellaby's version of the Latin tag quoted at the start ran, "If you want to keep alive in the jungle, you must live as the jungle does". It could stand as an epigraph for most of Wyndham's work.



"Nu Couché", brush and India ink on paper, 1953; from an exhibition of drawings and engravings by Nicolas de Staël at Taraman, 236 Brompton Road, London SW3.

Piling it on

By Antonia Phillips

Nicolas de Staël
Tate Gallery

At the time of his suicide in 1955, Nicolas de Staël was enjoying a brilliant reputation on both sides of the Atlantic, and his bold abstract and semi-abstract canvases seemed then as exciting as anything emerging from New York. The reputation has faded; and the exhibition at the Tate Gallery is a welcome opportunity to judge how well his work has stood up to developments in painting over the past quarter-century. The exhibition is a reduced version of the retrospective held earlier this year at the Grand Palais: all of the graphic work and some forty-four oils, mostly of the last fifteen years of intense and obsessive labour — de Staël destroyed all the canvases he had painted before 1940 — and progresses from a figurative style reminiscent of Cézanne, El Greco and Picasso, as in "Portrait of Jeannine", to a form of abstraction indebted to Cubism (and so less close to the slap and trickle of New York painting than it might at first seem), with a gradual return to figurative representation.

Until 1949, de Staël's paintings were visions of lornet, dark, impenetrable vortices, with sticks painfully crossed and barred. The paintwork is astonishingly heavy — grim and greasy earth-colours, evil greens, tans, occasional dabs of scarlet or white, applied layer upon layer with thick and not always clean brushes — reinforcing the sense of a world crashing in, echoed in titles like "La vie dure", "Porte sans porte", "Bâtons rompus", "Barrière". During this period de Staël suffered extremes of poverty and depression (what sacrifices can have been made to pay for all that paint?), in 1946 his companion Jeannine Guillou died of an illness which was traced to malnutrition — her painting had supported the couple much of the time.

Material circumstances improved as de Staël's paintings began to be shown and to sell, and in the pictures the despair also eases. The planes open up, lose their acute angles in favour of more restful rectangles; the space flattens, the palette lightens to include subtle greys and whites, blues, mustard yellows and khaki. The paint is plastered and knifed and built up into thick separate slabs. In the fissures between which can be seen canvas and traces of earlier layers, inspiring an almost geological fascination with the pictorial surface. How long did de Staël allow the paint to dry before knifing on another colour? Did the layers interpenetrate? It is difficult to agree with de Staël himself about some of these late paintings: "évidemment parfois c'est trop esquissé sans être assésé, autout de près c'est rien . . . Il faut s'habituer, à finir plus sans finir, ce n'est pas facile".

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to the editor

Judging the Booker Prize

Sir, — Much could be written concerning the Booker McConnell Prize in this and future years which would be more fruitful than the complaints about my report in *The Guardian* which occupy half of Hermione Lee's article (October 30). Our feelings are far less important than the award and the novels involved.

The prize has now been established for thirteen years. Its prestige has grown, and possibly its selections have become less eccentric. Perhaps there is some correlation between the responsibility of the judges and the attention paid to their judgments.

This year's judges were concerned because comparatively little publicity attended a season when a feast of good novels was set before us. How to do justice to that feast? From a critical point of view, to bestow an accolade worth £10,000 on one novel and nothing on its siblings is absurd; it makes sense, however, in the usual competition terms: that the exercise is good for everyone. And despite some absurdities, to which we bow, the Booker is good — possibly vital — for English novelists. It should therefore be made as much a subject of general interest as possible. We all discussed this problem; I acted.

A dead period, a month without news, has always separated the announcement of the short-list from the announcement of the winner. Such interest as the short-list has engendered (this year almost nil) dies in that lull. My report terminated that dormancy, awakening the attention the Booker needs. Incidentally, I asked the Booker administrator, Martyn Goff, for permission to write my piece, but naturally did not lay on him any responsibility for having to comment. I sent a copy before publication to our chairman, Malcolm Bradbury — then just back from the States — and he made no complaint to me about it.

My "revelations" had a precedent last year, in an article by Margaret Forster, who obviously felt as I do that it is pretentious for Booker judges to have to behave as if they were a government department, sworn to secrecy. Why should judges not be answerable, as novelists also learn to be? As for naming names, novelists already have to endure ordeals by review, often by condescending critics who may know their subject as well as the novelists themselves. They could not be too disturbed to learn that their book was seriously considered, even if it did not reach the top of the pile. Any argument that they should be shielded from such dangers because they did not enter their novels themselves is a pure non sequitur; neither did they submit their novels for review in *The Observer*, or wherever. These are jobs publishers undertake.

A desire not to be accountable in part a desire to present the final verdict as if it enshrines some unchallengeable truth about the novel (and perhaps it does: time will tell; certainly our chairman devised an excellent method of winnowing the truth). Our disagreements were a tribute to the richness and diversity of the year's novels. The composition of the jury, too, virtually guaranteed disagreement, but I believe we all enjoyed those challenging meetings. Our short-list is an interesting one; though one may wonder if realist novels, such as Alan Judd's *A Breed of Heroes*, would stand much chance of reaching it.

It is all very well to discourse in abstract terms about a novel, expounding the new types of metaphorical structure it deploys, but novels also represent something outside themselves. Such matters as whether the role of the British Army in Northern Ireland (*A Breed of Heroes*) or Mrs Gandhi in India (*Midnight's Children*), or of Sigmund Freud in Europe (*The White Hotel*), are effectively portrayed within the novel concerned also have relevance.

This year (and possibly every year) the English novel confounds the old charge that it looks only inward at itself; yet the question remains that is it, what some perfectionists would like it to do. When novels address themselves to the classroom only, then indeed *The Nobel* will be dead, and the judges will keep silent.

Such questions — and the reader about whether the short-list should enshrine six or seven novels, all with an equal chance of winning, or should carry a concealed winner like a joker and five other favourites, which together represent a spectrum of achievement — will exercise juries every year. Our experience this year suggests that preliminary meetings are necessary before sifting procedures begin.

There exists a literate general audience in this country which would be deeply interested in such deliberations. The argument against broadcasting judicial debates, whether on radio or TV, apparently rests on the vain notion that "No one could resist wanting to appear wittier, more authoritative, more sympathetic than their colleagues". The public is brighter than some academics imagine and would see through such plays as readily as they do in parliamentary broadcasts. Here is a unique opportunity for readers to listen to five fairly well-informed people discussing a year's harvest of noteworthy novels. Perhaps some pain might be suffered (isn't it always?), but literary life would be enriched. At the least, such scrutiny would prevent judges bending their own self-imposed rules.

The impartiality of judges must always be subject to examination. We have to resist a natural impulse to back our friends, whose writings we know best, and we have to resist being impressed simply because a novel bears a respected author's name. These are two questions which most concern the public, to judge by my current postbag. They caused us trouble this year.

These personal short-lists, which *The Guardian* and *The Sunday Times* kindly published, were my equivalent of the postcards which our chairman suggested should be sent to several writers to whom we were not quite able to award Alphas in our serious game. They were, in other words, designed to cheer — a gleam in the rough weather novelists are now enduring. My impulse was admiration for excellent writing, not contempt for my hard-working fellow judges.

BRIAN ALDISS,
16 Moreton Road, Oxford OX2 7AX.

'Renaissance Self-Fashioning'

Sir, — In *Remembrance Self-Fashioning*, Stephen Greenblatt writes: "We need, at this level, bring nothing to the text but ourselves" (page 179). He complains (Letters, September 25) about my ellipsis of "at this level". But he must really accept that there is a standpoint (mine, for example) from which these are not at all "crucial words". The view I tried to express (September 4) was that we may not treat Elizabethans as our contemporaries on any "level" at all — certainly not at the level in question, namely, a tendentious interpretation of Spenser's allegory. Even moral, political and psychological terms have altered. In Tudor times, for example, the distinction between Spanish and English colonial methods (a distinction to which Mr Greenblatt never, I think, refers) was of some importance.

He believes that he has proved fastidious by supplying the continuation. "Fuller understanding, however, requires that we confront not only personal history but the history of the nation." But his next sentence again: "We must, as Clifford Geertz suggests, incorporate the work of art into the texture of a particular pattern of life, a collective

experience that transcends it and completes its meaning." And it is just here that my objection to his method arises: for the work of art is not there to be "incorporated" until it is constructed by the reader. Now, that construction can be right or wrong. And, if we regard *Trifid* works as written today, we are liable to take them in quite inappropriate, perhaps opposite, senses (something I exemplified from Mr Greenblatt's book in my review).

As to my anachronistic use of the term "third world", here I must confess to having been tripped. (Even modern English has its hermeneutic perils.) I mean to suggest the sort of blurring that Mr Greenblatt's way of modernizing leads to. Perhaps I should conclude by saying that I sympathize with his wish to find modern equivalents to Tudor issues.

ALASTAIR FOWLER,
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Hume Tower, George Square, Edinburgh EH8 9JX.

Seventeenth-Century Drama

Sir, — Since your readers may infer from the prominence you accord it that William P. Williams's letter (October 23) contains points of substance, let me point out (a) that no one who reads my review with any care could deduce from it that no plays were performed during the Puritan Revolution, and (b) that the question whether Richard Rostyn and Humphrey Mosely can legitimately be described as printers rather than booksellers or publishers does not affect my argument. Mr Williams will find an introduction to Mosely's royalist in P. W. Thomas's *Sir John Berkehead* (1969).

BLAIR WROEN,
St Edmund Hall, Oxford OX1 4AR.

Misprints in Books

Sir, — I was sorry to read of the misfortunes of Michael Kennedy (Letters, October 23). The reasons he gives for the steadily increasing numbers of misprints in books are correct, I have no doubt. How much better, in this respect, was the previous method of hot-metal setting where corrections were incorporated in lines of type metal which could be read and substituted for incorrect lines with nearly perfect reliability.

We have stayed with letterpress production methods, as opposed to photo-composition. Galley-proofs are returned to us from the publisher with, on average, three errors per galley-proof of 120 lines. Our page-proofs average less than one error per galley of three pages. All printers should be able to achieve this standard without extra cost.

What is needed is for authors and publishers to insist on seeing revised or ozalids from the printers. No extra cost should be involved since corrections not incorporated are done at the printer's expense. There should be no delay in production because the publisher would not continue to use a printer who misses scheduled dates through his own carelessness.

CASPAR STANDING,
Daedalus Press, Somers Road,
Widnes, Cambridgeshire PE13 1JF.

Sir, — Fair's fair, though, I agree with Michael Kennedy's letter (October 23), but, so far, at least one Scottish firm is exemplary — perhaps I mean splendidly old-fashioned. A 382-page biography of mine published last year by Oxford University Press and printed by Morrison & Co. had very few errors in proof, of which four lines ones came by me because I was moving house at the time, but the twelve-page index, in proof and on publication, had no errors at all that I could see. It would be interesting to know which

publishers now read proofs, as some have done ever since it was realized that both printers' and authors' proofreading can be pretty ducky. Many authors are just not the proof-reading type, but surely it's a printer's business to be so?

PRISCILLA METCALF,
37 Gainsborough House, Erasmus
Street, London SW1.

Railway Timetables

Sir, — I fear that a sentence in my review of British Rail's *Continental Timetable* (Summer 1981), published in the *TLS* of October 23, may have unwittingly misled those of your readers who hope to travel to Spain or, for that matter, France. May I beg for space to disentangle my remarks on the location of La Tour de Carol-Enveigt?

Since this looks at first as if it might be a German or Austrian town, I reserved happily that British Rail's new system for indexing destinations by name of town rather than country by country would enable passengers alighting at La Tour de Carol-Enveigt to discover that they were in fact in Spain. A correspondent has now kindly pointed out to me that this town is actually in France.

Worse, I suggested that, although the Paris-Alençon service appears to rush straight through, La Tour de Carol-Enveigt lurks in the thirty-one-mile stretch between Port-Bou and Fléssas. My correspondent, who gives all the local stations and declares that this is a very interesting route, tells me that La Tour de Carol-Enveigt is not on the Paris-Alençon line at all; it is on a sort of head-strong spur running between Toulouse and Barcelona.

I have studied the decision tree which British Rail has thoughtfully placed at the beginning of the *France/Iberia* section of the *Timetable*, and, sure enough, La Tour de Carol-Enveigt hovers just above the Spanish side of the border. It is, however, floating over a pocket, shown in dotted lines, which may indicate that it is the main junction for some autonomous region. The train to take is the *Catalan-Talga*, not the *Mare Nostrum*. It is air-conditioning and knives and forks in squares (ray meals).

JANET MORGAN,
Home Close, Emsfield, Oxon.

Nuclear War

Sir, — Elizabeth Young uses the excuse of a previous book review to formulate a logical syllogism on the subject of nuclear war and disarmament (Letters, October 23). Using the excuse of her letter, I must point out that her conclusion may be "valid" but is quite wrong.

It is based on the familiar and quite silly assertion that unilateral disarmament is a mistake because so far no nuclear Power or Super-power has ever been attacked by either nuclear or conventional forces. The operative phrase, of course, is "so far". This argument is reminiscent of the man who jumped off the Empire State Building, and as he passed each floor on his rapid descent was heard to cry "All right so far, all right so far . . ."

I agree with Ms Young that general disarmament must be the ultimate goal but this does not preclude, in the world's present ominous straits, some possibilities of unilateral disarmament and/or nuclear-free zones. She has fallen into a trap which awaits all those who seek to use pure logic to deal with concrete and very dangerous realities — what is needed is sweet reason and common sense.

IAN WEBSTER,
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An introduction to *Modern Political Theory*, by Norman P. Barry, which was reviewed in our issue of September 18, is also published by Macmillan in paperback at £4.95; only the hardback price of £12.50 was mentioned in the review.

'Images of Chelsea'

Sir, — May I defend a young bibliographer against what I believe to be the most irresponsible criticism in your columns? I am publishing a series of books, under the title "Images of London", each of which aims to reproduce all the printed views of an area of London up to 1860 and any of particular interest with topographical content after that date. I have commissioned Jonathan Oichburn to undertake the massive task of compiling the catalogue of prints which forms the bulk half of each volume. The first title, *Images of Chelsea*, was reviewed on February 31 by J. Monlamant Crook.

Dr Crook rightly identified Mr Oichburn's catalogue as the academic heart of the matter but dismissed it as disappointing because of its omissions, of which he listed some apparently glaring examples. The most important were several etchings by Theodore Rissard; a print of "Pugin's Chelsea home"; and the fact that "inevitably perhaps, there is no record of every state of every print". Since the form of the catalogue is specifically designed to distinguish the many differing states of views published before 1860 by the commercial printmakers (a task not previously attempted), the last was a particularly serious failing. I therefore wrote to Dr Crook asking if we could have details of the missing prints for our files.

Dr Crook replied promptly, saying that as he was no expert on prints, he had sought the advice of a friend in an Oxford bookshop, and that for further information I should also consult this friend. My letter to the friend brought no response for two months, whereupon Dr Crook apologized for his friend's eccentricities (which included not answering letters, and having tea most days from 3.45 to 4.15 with the Costume and Textile Department of Christie's, South Kensington, where I might well catch him). A letter to the eccentric at tea time proved equally unsuccessful and I told Dr Crook of a growing suspicion that his criticisms might be without foundation. I noted that I was considering writing in complaint to the *TLS*. This he declared to be pointless, on the grounds that his friend's eccentricities included not reading the *TLS*. My reply that Dr Crook perhaps read the *TLS*, and had written the review, finally brought some further details of Mr Oichburn's omissions.

Dr Crook pointed in thirty-four Chelsea prints, listed as such in a catalogue of Rissard's work, of which Mr Oichburn had only included eighteen; but he checked the list and had included all that were remotely topographical (the others are of such Chelsea subjects as Mrs Cyprian Williams in fancy dress). The print of Pugin's house in Cheyne Walk (not Pugin's home, but gothicized by him for a patron) turned out to be a rough stereotyped wood-engraving twenty-seven years after our period, from the *Building News* of 1887; however the association would have justified inclusion, and this could be called an omission. As to the variant states of the earlier prints, Dr Crook advised — without further detail — that it might be helpful to look in the Bodleian and the Ashmolean. In such rich collections, full of extra-illustrated volumes, there may well lurk states and even prints unknown to Mr Oichburn — as apparently also to Dr Crook.

Dr Crook said that omissions were inevitable. True enough, in a catalogue listing nearly 900 prints and variant states on a previously unattempted subject. What I could question is the balance of a review in which an unsupported and largely irrelevant attack on such inevitable omissions is made, while not a word is said about the extent and organization of what is actually in the catalogue; and the sense of responsibility of a reviewer who sends a serious book off to a friend to get an opinion on the main subject-matter about which, as he later privately admits, he himself knows little.

BAMBER GASCOIGNE,
Saint Helena Press, 1 Saint Helena Terrace, Richmond, Surrey.

Among this week's contributors

J. L. ACKRILL is Professor of the History of Philosophy at the University of Oxford. His *Aristotle the Philosopher* will be reviewed shortly in the *TLS*.

NICOLAS BARKER is Head of Conservation at the British Library.

JOHN BAVLEY is Warton Professor of English Literature at the University of Oxford.

ALAN BELL's biography of Sydney Smith was published last year.

A. R. BISLEY's most recent book *The Fast of Roman Britain*, 1981, is reviewed in this issue.

EDWARD BURNS is a lecturer in English at the University of Liverpool.

PAUL CARLBOON is a Fellow of Clare College, Cambridge.

DOUGLAS QUINN's most recent collection of poems is *St. Kilda's Parthenon*, 1981.

EVA PLESS's recent novels include *Waking*, 1980.

APRIL FITZLYON is writing a biography of the singer Maria Malibran.

S. S. PRATT's books include *Brumaire: A History of Roman Britain*, 1967.

JOHN RULLER's most recent collection of poems, *The Illusions*, was published earlier this year.

PETER GREEN's recent books include *The Parthenon*, 1973, and *Alexander of Macedon 336-323 BC: A Historical Biography*, 1974.

NIGEL HAMILTON has recently been awarded a Whitbread prize for his *Money: the Making of a General*, 1897-1942, 1981.

JOHN HINDE MASON's *The Indispensable Rousseau* was published in 1979.

ALISTAIR HORNE's books include *The Price of Glory: Verdun 1916*, 1962 and *Regular Armies and Insurgency*, 1979.

GRAHAM HUGHES's books include *The Dark Side: A Study of D. H. Lawrence*, 1957.

DOUGLAS JOHNSON is Professor of French History at University College London.

PETER KEMP's critical study *H. G. Wells and the Culminating Ape* will be published in 1982.

PAUL KENNEDY's most recent book is *The Realities Behind Diplomacy: Background Influences on British Foreign Policy, 1865-1980*, 1981.

ERIC KORN is an antiquarian bookseller in London.

STEPHEN KOSSE's books include *Asquith*, 1976.

ADAM MARR-JONES's collection of stories *Lighters* was published last month.

GEORGE MARSHALL's books include *Constitutional Theory*, 1971.

EDWIN MORGAN's collections of poems include *Star Gate*, 1979.

OSWYN MURRAY is a Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford.

ALASTAIR NIVEN is Director General of The Africa Centre and Honorary Lecturer at the School of Oriental and African Studies.

J. A. NORTH is Senior Lecturer in Ancient History at University College London.

P. J. PARISH is Bonar Professor of Modern History at the University of Dundee.

P. J. RHODES's *Commentary on the Aristotelian Athenian Politics* will be published shortly.

MAX PERUTZ is a Nobel Laureate in Chemistry. He was the founder and for seventeen years the Chairman of the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge.

PETER PORTER's most recent collection of poems is *English Subtleties*, 1981.

ROBIN ROBINSON has edited the

pari materia. Comtean positivists adapted Greek religions and philosophical phenomena to the three-stage model of intellectual development: religious, metaphysical, positivist. Similarly, Hegelians saw in the passage from the archaic to the classical world the triumph of *Moralität* over mere *Sittlichkeit*. As Turner says, "these several philosophies of history did not function in hermetically sealed compartments", nor were those who argued for analogies between Greece and Britain always fully aware of them. For a nation of pragmatists the result was conceptual muddle and steaming emotionalism. But however eclectic their treatment, these notions supplied, one way and another, the framework for a century of polemic and speculation.

It is a great virtue of Turner's method that he approaches his subject not generically, but in linear, evolutionary, historical terms, tracing patterns of influence as they develop. Thus both constants and variables get their proper emphasis. If Victorian thinkers shared one characteristic throughout, it was that of political and intellectual elitism; if they had a constant common enemy, it was the hubbub of commercialism, materialism, and selfish bourgeois Philistinism (very often with minimalist or leonine-like modernism thrown in as an antisocial makeweight). To what extent Matthew Arnold had a point, they tended, further, to believe in the uniformity of human nature (if not in the common nature of that uniformity), and to stress moral or ethical issues (though seldom from the same standpoint). But this was about the limit of their common ground, as becomes very clear — to take one of Turner's more striking examples — from their treatment of Plato.

Till after 1840 the Platonic corpus, untaynt and largely untranslated, lay in a kind of intellectual limbo. Plato's thought was held to be impractical, and thus (as Macmily

informed leaders of the *Edinburgh Review*) irrelevant to an age of progress. (In 1816, during the debate over the Elgin Marbles, the experts consulted came down squarely in favour of realism and naturalism in the wings.) A character in Plato's *Republic* (the *Republic* of the *Republic*) observed that contemporary universities also regarded Plato as "little better than a misleader of youth". In due course, however, liberal Anglicans such as Sewall and Blackie and A.E. Taylor got hold of Plato and used his doctrines to uphold traditional Christian ethics against utilitarianism — whereupon his university status promptly improved. The utilitarians, in turn, employed Plato's moral and political philosophy as a surrogate to replace Christian values: where Taylor had "transformed the *Republic* into a Hellenic *Pilgrim's Progress*", Grote saw Plato as a kind of radical Benthamite, a questioner of all established values. In this tug-of-war the figure of Socrates perhaps suffered most: his irony forgotten, he was presented successively as a liberalist, a radicalist, a gaudy, a substitute Christ-figure and mystic, or a no-nonsense early Victorian Melancthon.

To Christian scholars of all denominations, the fact that it was Grote, of all people, who wrote the standard nineteenth-century work on Plato (its conclusions still a starting-point for much argument today), came as a supremely inapplicable irony: Blackie, for instance, held it to be "no less inappropriate than Voltaire's composing a commentary on the fourth Gospel". Jowett created a Hegelian Plato: his disciples employed this odd figure "to encourage a collective civic life in which the individualism of the mid-Victorian period would come under the benevolent direction of the state and of a civic elite that resembled Marx's vision of bureaucracy". Through Oxford and the Civil Service examinations the Empire struck back: it is

not hard to see how Rhodes or Kipling would look at the *Republic*. Later, on the other hand, could treat the doctrine of Plato as a vindication of the senses: Nettleship related the *Republic* to the medieval theory of the senses; the idealist ideal; Ernest Barker put the same dialogue to work as a handbook indicating service to the state. After beginning the century in neglect, Plato ended it with a revival that far outshone that of the Renaissance. Though Grote had been worried by the philosopher's political insouciance, by his moral illiberalism, it was left for our own age to far and feather Plato as an out-and-out totalitarian. The symbolic exploitation of past and present continues.

Equally startling, though in political rather than religious terms, is the metamorphosis of the Athenian constitution, as seen by English historians, from a late eighteenth-century bourgeois idealism to the worst features of lawless anarchy, political chaos, and disregard for personal security, to an Edwardian model of idealized social and political aspirations for classically-educated servants of Empire to initiate. Turner's chapter on this remarkable transformation is at once an object-lesson in disinterested research and a historiographical horror-story. No man can be wholly impartial, and we catch a glimpse of where Turner stands from his uncharacteristic encomium of Zimmern's *Greek Commonwealth*, which he describes as "one of the most sensitive, eloquent, evocative and humane works ever written about Athens in this language". Such judgments, pro or con, are rare in this book, and all the more effective as a result. Andrew Lang is savagely dismissed: "At his best he was only a gifted amateur and at his worst a polemical bore." Frazer gets short shrift for transforming Demeter and Persephone "into wheat-sheaf dolls".

On the nineteenth-century historians Turner's objectivity is withering. His wit, castic, skilfully he relates their treatment of evidence to their own political and moral predilections, noting Arnold's obsession with "the ideal unity of the Greek polis as the means of overcoming modern democratic pluralism". Grote's disconcerting habit of equating the Athenian Assembly with Parliament. Pericles with the Prime Minister. Cleon with some Opposition spokesmen. We can see why Sparta was so highly regarded at the opening of the century but condemned at its close, why Mitford rehabilitated the tyrant, why Grote trod so gingerly in his treatment of Solon and Pericles ("this scenario too closely resembled the confiscation of property during the French Revolution and Napoleon's later tyranny to suit Grote's polemical purposes"). How Gladstone's Peelite view of Homeric politics brought him into conflict with the utilitarians, how and why the hot potato of slavery was handled more boldly from 1847 onwards (not only the end of the American Civil War but also the passing of the Second Reform Act), how views of Macedonia in the fourth century BC were conditioned by Anglo-German relations before 1914. Finally, we are left with an unforgettable image of London huses, a year later, carrying extracts from Pericles' Funeral Oration on official war-propaganda posters. "The debate over the Athenian constitution", Turner concludes, "was primarily a debate over the conservative image of democracy and not over democracy itself." It would be hard, in the face of the evidence he musters, to argue with that verdict.

The same mastery of material and independence of judgment inform every topic on which he turns that shrewdly penetrating eye of his. Max Müller's Aryanism, for instance, like his theories of solar myth, offers a tempting target to the modern cynic (of Heraeus' death Müller wrote: "Another magnificent sunset..."); but Turner puts his finger unerringly

on the quality that endeared this pompous, Teutonic eccentric to Victorian England: the notion that the original inability of the Aryan race would save mankind from Darwinism, that the embarrassing habits of "theft, murder, lying, incest, adultery, homosexuality, promiscuity, sodomy and castration" attributed to the Greek gods or heroes by our sources were all decadent late accretions, that, as Müller assured his readers, "in all these tales there is nothing of which, in its old shape, we ought to be ashamed." No wonder he was offered a knighthood and made a Privy Councillor! Turner also gets to the heart of Gladstone's odd obsessions about Homer, sees precisely why John and Arnold were far from pleased by Schlegel's archaeological discoveries (Tyrus in particular so offended Jebb's preconceived notions of high Homeric culture that he argued strongly for the ruins being Byzantine), and pinpoints the advantages enjoyed by Aristotle's *Ethics* as an instrument of education: it was sensible, it upheld social elitism (thus appealing equally to Anglicanism and the aristocracy), it did not evoke mystical or radical yearnings in the young, much less challenge traditional beliefs regarding the sanctity of property or the family, and (as Mark Pattison in an unguarded moment admitted) it was an ideal text from which to set examination questions.

Again and again we find Turner's sharply critical insights operating on a basis of exhaustive research: the combination is formidable. *The Greek Heritage in Victorian Britain* seems to me one of the most important and far-reaching investigations of the roots of intellectual history to be published in decades, a book to be read and reread (as much for its incidental felicities and endlessly quotable aphorisms as for its central arguments), to be annotated, argued with, and debated on specific issues for years to come. It is a truly monumental achievement.

By A. R. Birley

PETER SALWAY: *Roman Britain* 324pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £19.50. 0 19 821717 X

Roman Britain and the English Settlements, by R. G. Collingwood and J. N. L. Myres, the original Volume 1 of the *Oxford History of England*, appeared in 1936, and the revised edition of 1937 long remained a standard work. Collingwood's portion, *Roman Britain* (which the work under review replaces as Volume 1), occupied 324 pages, plus sixteen in the Bibliography and, allowing for about two-thirds of the Index, say about 360 pages in all out of 515. Peter Salway cannot help the price inflation: Volume 1 cost 12s 6d in 1937 (but readers seeking consolation in his Chapter 10 will find him curiously silent on the gigantic monetary inflation of the third century). And increase in length was inevitable, as he notes in the preface. "Collingwood wrote in very different circumstances". Indeed, Collingwood actually wrote that "Modern books wholly dealing with Roman Britain are not very numerous", which is certainly no longer so. In some ways this has made things easier: for example, *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain*, Volume 1, published in 1965 under the names of Collingwood himself (twenty-two years after his death) and of his co-author and successor in that post, R. P. Wright, is an indispensable aid. But a vast mass of new material, mainly archaeological, has appeared since 1970, to the hindrance of *Roman Britain Studies*. Meanwhile S. S. Frere's substantial monograph, *Britannia*, had already, from its first publication in 1967, become the standard replacement for Collingwood — at the very moment when Salway was commissioned to write an entirely new work rather than, as initially intended, to bring the original up to date. There are now eleven solid volumes of the new *Journal of Roman Studies*, and scores of other works "wholly dealing with Roman Britain" or aspects of it.

Mr Salway has had to digest it all, at least up to 1977, when he more or less closed the ledger, while editing, sometimes by the device of lengthy notes at the end of chapters, to take account of subsequent work. In most respects he is thoroughly abreast of recent theories and discoveries. Thus current doubts about which Britons were "Belgic" and when Britain was Celticized are handled with a sure touch in Chapter 1: the possibility that Honorius' famous letter of 410 may not have been to the cities of Britain at all (but to those of *Bretio*, i.e. Brittium or Calabria), tersely favoured by A. L. F. Rivet in the monumental *Place-Names of Roman Britain* (with Colin Smith, 1979), is cautiously ventilated in Chapter 15; and the demolition of Cunéda as a historical figure by D. M. Dumville is accepted. It is sad that Salway was unable to re-cast his Appendix IV on Cogidubnus in the light of J. E. Bogaers' convincing demonstration that that ruler was called, on the Clithester inscription, not "King (and) Legate of the Emperor in Britain" but "Great King of Britain". The former was anomalous, the new version preposterous but paralleled in the east for petty rulers of more than one people, *quodam civitates*. Charles Thomas's *Christianity in Roman Britain* (1981) is one of several recent works which would doubtless have caused Salway to write differently (and not merely on Christianity) had he been able to consult it.

Collingwood had four sections (or Books). Salway, relieved of the need to accommodate an Anglo-Saxon colleague, is able to have five. Striking a balance between narrative and analysis is never easy. Collingwood inserted his "Book III", "Britain under Roman rule", between II, covering Claudius to Severus, and

ROME

The assimilation of Britain

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IV, from Caracalla to Arthur. Salway sensibly gets the whole sweep of narrative history out of the way, from Caesar (and what Caesar found) to Britain and Gaul around AD 50 (Arthur gets summary treatment, compared with the poetical historical novel which Collingwood created), in his first four sections, covering just over 500 pages. The hubbub stresses that this is "not an archaeology of Roman Britain, but a history", yet section V, in five chapters, is a valuable and stimulating synthesis of well over two hundred pages, covering "The assimilation of Britain", historical geography, town and country, the economy, religion and society. On the population, although characteristically cautious, Salway strikingly illustrates the changes made to our thinking by recent discoveries: "all previous ideas of the density of settlement were very much on the low side". Collingwood opted for "a round million" as his guess, Salway shows a preference for a figure four to six times higher and comments on the implications.

On many subjects discussed with confident authority by Collingwood, there are quite new perspectives, well put across here: on continuity, not least, from British to Roman, from Romano-British to Anglo-Saxon, there is now some evidence; on villas and villages; on relations between town and country. Art, given a memorable separate chapter by Collingwood, on artist's son, is, in view of the emphasis on history rather than archaeology, excluded from special treatment; a wise decision, no doubt, in any case, when the classic exposition by J. M. C. Toynbee is available. Salway laments in his Bibliography the lack of "an up-to-date monograph on the army in Britain". He might usefully have gathered together and supplemented his various sections in a separate chapter. But P. A. Holder's *The Roman Army in Britain*, to appear shortly, will supply this gap.

Collingwood was the undisputed leader of Romano-British studies in the inter-war years, even being known (affectionately) as *Duce* to some of his disciples. In the *Oxford History*, "his feet are on the mantlepiece, he enjoys himself, and his reader with him", as Mortimer Wheeler put it; but, he added, the method was dangerous for "the innocent student". Much of the book is indeed close to historical fiction, "great fun, but liable to shock the pedant". Times have changed, the field is more crowded, and Salway is well aware of the intense debates, sometimes rivalries, within it. He also refers defensively to "a curious prejudice against Romano-British studies" by those outside, as if these studies "were in some way not quite intellectually respectable." Perhaps Collingwood had something to do with this. His "predecessor" Haverfield was Camden Professor of Ancient History; Collingwood was an academic in a quite different field, who was to become Waynflete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy. In a sense, he was an amateur archaeologist with a special interest in Roman Britain. Thereby perhaps the subject was divorced, or at least separated, from the mainstream of ancient history and archaeology, at Oxford if not elsewhere. We are told on the dustjacket that Salway "takes a relatively detached view of current scholarly controversy", and he himself stresses that "there is no agreement on many major issues and... no possibility that all aspects of the subject can ever again be comprehended by one historian".

He certainly has the right background to make the attempt: classics at Cambridge in the days of A.H.M. Jones; research in Germany and at Newcastle; and a first book on the subject, the editing of Sir Ian Richmond's papers (published in 1969); participation in the Fenland project (published in 1970), on all of which he naturally draws heavily, and, more recently, work with the Open University, through which he has helped to make this subject more widely accessible. But he seems to regard himself as something of a lone wolf, and in some cases his detachment has put him slightly out

of touch. The division of Dacia is still attributed to Antoninus Pius, although since 1961 Hadrian is known to have been responsible. Boninus, a shadowy third-century usurper, is still included for his "British father", although the bogus parent's alleged profession (scholar-master) is omitted; this fantasy of the *Historia Augusta* did not deserve a revived existence after the labours of Sir Ronald Syme and others. Salway devotes more space to the huckwheed of another usurper, the more important fourth-century rival of Constantius II, Magnentius. Why not discuss Zenaras' statement that he had a British father, for which there is some not obviously contaminated support, which adds a Frankish mother and a birthplace at Amiens? This would have helped to explain why his overthrow led to such a bloody purge in Britain.

Recourse to, and citation of, the various indispensable aids such as the *Real-encyclopædie*, the *Prosopographia Imperii Romanii*, H. G. Pflaum's *Carrères Prosopographiques*, and the *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* by Jones, Martin, and Morris, would have been economical, easy, salutary, and helpful to the reader. As it is, some may be baffled, for example, to find as sole justification for the view that M. Maenius Agrippa was "possibly simultaneously prefect of the British fleet and procurator of the province 'under Antoninus Pius'" a footnote

reading "See note to *CIL* VII, 379", where Hubner, in 1873, quoted Agrippa's career inscription found in Italy, from Orelli — republished in *CIL* XI, by Dessau in *ILS*, discussed at length by Pflaum as his no 120; *CIL* VII 379 is of course reproduced as *RIH* 823 by Collingwood and Wright, with some hithography. Or again, Mr Salway holdily writes of Maximian making his praetorian prefect Constantius a Caesar, with no hint that Constantius' prefecture was only a conjecture of Otto Seck, long ago abandoned; instead he launches into a discussion of the significance of the office.

Some digressions of this kind could have been pruned, valuable though it is that in a book that will be read by many non-specialists in classical antiquity explanations of Roman politics and society abound. Salway includes a good many lengthy verbatim citations from a host of modern writers, chief among them A. H. M. Jones. This has its merits, but it makes a long book even longer. So too does his scholarly diction: "the vexed question... one of those controversies... I personally still favour the view... I agree with others... out in the least likely... we may guess... without the precision of exact epigraphic or literary evidence... particularly liable to rapid renaissance... But caution must remain", all from one paragraph (on the *Ritus Saxonicum*) — could he not have been bolder or not

least more concise? As early as p.202 he pleads lack of space "to list and discuss all the evidence, which for a period so hotly discussed [the later second century] among scholars ought really to be presented". Instead he relies, in that case, on the admirable *Hadrian's Wall* (1976) by D. J. Breeze and B. Dobson. But it would have been handy and instructive to have the evidence presented.

Is it this sort of thing — of which Wheeler complained when reviewing Collingwood — that feeds the "curious prejudice" referred to earlier, prejudice among "mainstream" ancient historians, perhaps, notoriously — excessively, as Keith Hopkins has urged — prone to elevate the ancient sources "to the level of sacred texts"? It would be unfair to reproach Salway further on this score. He has been constrained, as far as his scholarly apparatus and annotation are concerned, by the limits of the *Oxford History* style. His hedging may at times be overdone, but the field has become rather a jungle, and "the innocent student", who, Wheeler feared, "may not know what will voice his 'moral speaks' when reading Collingwood, will emerge after reading Salway, exhausted and battered, but no longer innocent."

Mr Salway may rest on his laurels, unless, as with *RBS*, the Press invite him to make an almost instant revision.

Marking the days

By J. A. North

H. H. SCULLARD: *Festivals and Ceremonies of the Roman Republic* 288pp. Thames and Hudson. £12. 0 500 40041 5

The religious festivals of the ancient Romans may seem a rather narrow subject for a book in a series which is aimed at the general reader as well as the student. They have a special importance for the real devotee of Roman Religion or for those who try to compare it with other religious systems; but, apart from seekers after enlightenment about the role of the Lupercalia in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, neither the general reader nor those who want an introductory book on Roman paganism will find what they need in these pages. In fact, however, it is one of the strengths of the "Aspects of Greek and Roman Life" series of which the author has been the general editor from the beginning, that it can find room for the particular as well as for the broad survey; what H. H. Scullard has given us is an excellent reference-book on the day-to-day events of the Roman calendar. It shares the merits of his other works, familiar to every student of Roman history from his very first introduction to the subject onwards: lucid books offer lucid analysis of the basic facts, combined with notes and references which convey a sense of the problems and progress of research, and of the excitement and opportunities of new discoveries.

Roman Festivals and Ceremonies has a famous predecessor in W. Warde Fowler's *Roman Festivals*, first published in 1899; this provides Scullard with his avowed model for the format, and his main purpose is to update it in the light of the fuller and more sophisticated editions of the inscriptions on which the subject is based, of new archaeological discoveries, and of a great weight of research on admittedly inadequate evidence. He departs from the model in adding accounts of other ceremonies (the triumph, public funerals and the ritual of public meetings) and in concentrating his attention on the period of Cicero and Caesar rather than on the remote past of King Numa and King Tarquin. This is a sensible decision because it is only in the later republic that there

is any hope of understanding how the system worked and how it related to the needs of Roman society; the only trouble is that many of the festivals, though still celebrated in due form, were already thoroughly obscure in the Romanist of Cicero's day, so that any commentator is necessarily drawn into speculation about their original meaning. It is never easy in religious history to separate the past from the present; least of all in Rome, where the significance of ritual was often conceived in terms of specific past events.

For Warde Fowler, on the other hand, interest in the remote past was central to the purpose of his book. He was writing very much in the light of the "discoveries" of contemporary anthropology, especially of the work of Tylor, Frazer and Robertson Smith, which seemed to offer him a secure evolutionary model, into which he thought he could fit Roman religious experience; he also had a more crucial clue. Mommsen's observation that the surviving copies of the calendar of the first century AD contained (written in capital letters) the nucleus of a much earlier calendar, perhaps dating from the sixth century BC. As he saw it, the Romans of the period of their early calendar were just emerging from the animistic, pre-deistic phase and were only in the process of evolving the conception of specific gods and goddesses; this development was never fully completed because of the powerful priestly authorities. So, the Romans provided a unique example of the evolutionary scheme in action, but frozen at a particular point of its development, half-way between animism and the worship of deities. The annual festivals played an important part in this theory, because in many of them the role played by the gods is obscure or debatable; in some cases the later Romans themselves argued about which was the god of a particular festival.

The theory has had great influence on subsequent work, though it would not be easy today to find anthropologists to support its theoretical basis. Scullard is still in general persuaded of its validity; he examines criticisms of the position, but decides that a "primitivist" position is a reasonable choice and goes on to say: "Some primitive ideas obviously survive into later times, but on the whole the Romans freed themselves from the crude manifestations of magic and taboos, to some extent deliberately." It is very doubtful whether this is anything more than the imposition of a preconceived notion, based on the assumption that what the author thinks "primitive" must be early and what he thinks "rational" must be later. As a matter of fact, magic in particular seems, as far as our evidence goes, to have become more prominent and important in later Rome than it had been in early times. While if "primitive" elements are in question, the custom of the public burial alive of human victims, in the attempt to avert disasters, seems to have been a new invention in the middle republic. The fact seems to be that Roman paganism contained at all periods a mixture of elements co-existing, which under the evolutionary scheme ought to belong to quite different periods. We have therefore no warrant for saying that where we find a particular practice "magical" it must necessarily be early.

It is a pity too that Scullard's commitment to this view has led him to understate the work of the French Indo-Europeanist, Georges Dumézil. Scullard may well be right, and he is certainly not alone in rejecting Dumézil's theories about the social and mythical structures common to all Indo-European societies; but the value of his discussions of individual ceremonies and festivals does not depend on accepting the total "ideology" of the Indo-Europeans and in this area there ought to be more reference to this innovative work, at least to enable the reader to judge for himself.

These criticisms, important in principle, hardly detract from the practical value of the book, which admirably fulfils its purpose of offering a detailed description of what went on in the main ceremonies and rituals of the Roman year. But perhaps a simpler reference-book would have resulted if Scullard had concentrated on the rituals which are prominent in the late republic and not followed the whole calendar day by day. There would have been a considerable loss to the specialist; but he could have avoided the rather weak three-fold structure (Introduction; cycle of festivals; other ceremonies). According to the neglected Dumézil, a triadic structure is buried deep in the Indo-European soul; in this case it might have been better to resist the temptation.

Manning the North-West Frontier

By S. S. Frere

MALCOLM TODD: *Roman Britain 55 BC-AD 400* 285pp. Fontana. Paperback, £2.95. 0 00 633756 2

ANTHONY R. BIRLEY: *The First in Roman Britain* 476pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. £30. 0 19 821717 X

The history of these islands during the first four centuries AD has not merely to be sought in the works of ancient authors; much of it has to be patched together from the evidence of innumerable archaeological digs, often fragmentary inscriptions, coinage studies, examination of photographs and many other sources. Much good judgment and sound sense is needed in selection as well as in encyclopaedic grasp of what is available. The historian of Roman Britain, however, also needs to keep abreast of what is written about other regions of, or near, the Roman Empire, not only for the new interpretations which they may suggest of his own material, but also for the light which they may throw on his chief characters, the governors and procurators, legionary commanders and so on, for whom their posting in Britain was only one incident in a long career and for whom career-inscriptions were set up in their home towns or in other provinces. The source-material is thus both complex and constantly expanding; attempted histories require frequent revision.

Malcolm Todd has written a very readable short history, with, as he says, the need of students in mind, and he contributes a number of valuable new ideas and perspectives. This plan is a straight historical narrative interrupted by only short excursions here and there, specifically on social, economic, religious or archaeological

aspects of the subject; where he pronounces personal judgments one sometimes may regret that lack of space precludes longer discussion, reasonable and salutary though most of these interventions are.

One of the drawbacks of the method is a certain imbalance between the treatment of periods well represented in the ancient sources and those not well attested; 180 pages are devoted to the years of mainly military history from Caesar to the early third century, and only sixty-five to the last, most flourishing, period of Roman Britain when more depends on archaeology. But the early chapters do contain short discussions of great insight, e.g. on the society and economy of pre-Roman Britain. Professor Todd has picked his way carefully through the complexities of modern archaeological evidence, though without quoting much of it, and very few actual errors of fact, or failures in proof-reading, can be detected. The former include some inconsistencies on the map of civitates (fig. 26); the Flavian date ascribed to the forts of Liwyn-y-Braun and Inveresk (pp. 102, 106); the use of S. as abbreviation for Sextus (*passim*); the altar on fig. 22 from Colchester in *Vallonia* which Mommsen described as once thought to have traded at Calist-by-Norwich, but which is no longer relevant to Britain; and a curious miscalculation of legionary strength on p.162. The only serious example of the latter is on p.196, where the date has been split out in give the surprising statement that about three hundred earthworks were thrown around the villa at Ely, Cam. This suggests the use of a dictaphone in composition.

This historical interpretation of archaeological results sometimes swings violently from old to new dogmas. In recent years there has been a strong reaction against the idea of large-scale prehistoric immigration ("invasion") into Britain, no doubt justified where first applied. But the view has become an uncritical article of faith. It is surprising that Todd did not perceive the inconsistencies in applying it to

the Belgic settlement of south-east Britain. Whatever may be one explanation of the arrival of Gallo-Belgic coinage of the first century AD, how else than by invasion and subsequent settlement can Divitius' rule in Britain be explained; how else the complete and sudden change to La Tène III material culture? These are facts which cannot be explained away merely by "the processes of trade and exchange". He takes a more critical view, though in the end with approval, of recent reinterpretations of the events of 196, involving himself in an inconsistency over the possible removal of troops from the Wall by Albinus then and by Allectus a century later. There is still no certainty about the fate of the frontier in 196.

Among new archaeological evidence taken into account is the Christian silver treasure found in 1975 at Water Newton (*Durobrivae*), where Todd emphasizes the evidence it provides of contacts with the wider Christian world and especially with the Church in the eastern provinces. Although he does not mention it, a suggestive parallel could be drawn with the eastern connections identified in the arrangements of the church at St. Albans (*Archaeologia* cv, 1976); though, the two strands of evidence may be a pointer to the origins of Christianity in Britain.

One of the results of several recent studies has been to stress the closely classical and literary character of the culture of the higher classes in late Roman Britain, a conclusion at first sight gratifying and flattering, and normally so taken in a very suggestive paragraph Todd distinguishes it as a characteristic of fundamental weakness, symptomatic of lack of intellectual power and political vigour. Indeed his chapters on the last stages of Roman Britain are probably the best in the book. There has been much new progress in our understanding of the fifth century, and he leads us through it all with zest.

Thus for a concise account of events and developments during the

four centuries of Roman Britain this book will be found both useful and stimulating; we need a second volume, however, to give a fuller picture of the contribution of recent archaeological discoveries, especially in the civilian field.

A. R. Birley's *Fasti* has long been in preparation, having been begun by Eric Birley about forty years ago; its appearance now will surely have somewhat the same effect on the release of knowledge as did the publication of *The Roman Inscriptions of Britain* a decade and a half ago. In both areas the information could be obtained elsewhere, but only at the cost of hard work which few were likely to contemplate systematically — knowing that the task was already in hand. *The Fasti* contains the careers (as far as they are known) of all men of Senatorial rank known to have held office in Britain — that is to say governors, *luridici*, legionary legates and Senatorial tribunes — together with those of officials of high equestrian rank, procurators and fleet commanders. It excludes Imperial freedmen and army officers of equestrian status such as *praefecti castrorum* or *legiones*, auxiliary commanders and below, whose careers are in the main now available in other works. In compensation a sensible break has been made with the tradition of such archives by taking us past the Diocletian reforms so as to include the officials of the last century of Roman rule.

In the sense that "history is about change" it gives us a most valuable collection of source-material which only a dedicated epigrapher could have assembled; but the book is far more than this, for Birley has provided a number of interpretative discussions on such subjects as the Senatorial career, the origins and careers of governors of Britain, together with those of other officials, as well as on various relevant historical problems; these include the military command in the fourth century and the dates of the successive divisions of Britain, first into two provinces, then into four, and later

into five. All these are of the greatest interest, being marked by great elegant critical scholarship of a mature, conservative kind and they for the most part carry conviction.

What is known of the careers of the various governors is of course especially revealing in terms of politics, since the evidence shows that governors of Britain were on the whole carefully selected for the tasks in view. Birley shows clearly how the system worked. The independence of his judgment is most apparent in his arguments for starting Agricola's governorship in 77 rather than 78 — arguments which will require careful examination even if at first sight they may not appear wholly convincing — and in his treatment of two other governors, the possibility of whose very existence recent writers have attempted to undermine. It is gratifying — indeed even amusing — to find that after all I. A. Richmond's proposal of Triarius Rufinus as the governor fragmentarily attested on the Reculver stone is not the wild error that it has been said to be, and that Ulpian Marcellus the younger is again restored to potential respectability. All in all, the "literary" side of Romano-British history has been immensely enriched by a book which will long remain a quarry for writers on the province and for those studying the workings of Imperial government.

The fourth edition of H. H. Scullard's *A History of the Roman World 753 to 449 BC* (522pp. Methuen, £12. 0 416 71480 2) takes account of several archaeological discoveries made since the publication of the third edition in 1961. The first two chapters on the foundation of Rome, "The Land and its Peoples" and "Regal Rome", have been largely rewritten and the text has been updated throughout. A discussion of the sources now forms a new chapter and the notes and bibliography have been revised and expanded. The book contains maps of the Roman world including plans of Carthage, Nova and Carthage.

The Geist in the Greek Zeiten

By Paul Cartledge

PAUL OLIVA
The Birth of Greek Civilization
Translated by Iris Drown Levine
200pp, 32 plates, 1981s £7.95
0 85613 021 3

Oliva Publishing have done well in bringing out this modified English version of a work originally published in French in 1976. But the book's claim that the period treated is "generally unfamiliar" will hardly wash, counting only books published in English, we find that no less than seven have appeared on some or all aspects of the history of pre-classical Greece in the past five years alone. Nor have all these books been aimed solely at a coterie of academic specialists. So the publication of *The Birth of Greek Civilization* prompts two questions: why this current fashion with early historical Greece? and does this latest manifestation of it either add something significantly novel in method and conclusions or ease the burden of possibly bemused pupils and teachers?

The first of these is by far the harder to answer satisfactorily. But not everyone will entirely accept the provocative thesis of Anthony Snodgrass, *Archaeology and the Prehistoric Past*, that the period from about 800 to 500 BC is the most important in all ancient Greek history. There is, no doubt, a great fascination in charting the rise of the Greek polis ("city-state") as a misleading translation and the invention of politics; in tracing the steps of Greek traders and emigrants who distributed Hellenic ideas and artifacts all round the Mediterranean basin and beyond; and in disentangling the multinational strands of

Archaic Greek visual art, literature, and speculative inquiry. Yet the period remains, historiographically speaking, very poorly documented indeed, and I suspect that its current attraction owes much to the *exoticism* of prehistoric Greece and something to boredom with the story that is classical Greece.

On the other hand, single-minded concentration on pre-classical Greece can have a major drawback. As Snodgrass above all has illustrated, all prehistory of human history is a matter primarily of contention and conjecture. But some periods seem more than just fragments of nature's scholarly imaginations, and their labels appear correspondingly to capture the *Zeitgeist* of real *Zeiten*. Two such periods, it has been widely agreed, are the "Archaic" and "Classical" eras of ancient Greece, punctuated by the Persian Wars of 480-479. In his recent book, however, Snodgrass has systematically opened the linear evolutionary perspective built into this fossilized terminology and shown reason to doubt whether the Persian Wars are a natural punctuation-mark between historical epochs.

Paul Oliva was not in a position to take the measure of Snodgrass's contribution. Nor could he profit from Oswyn Murray's *Early Greece* or the latest edition of John Boardman's *The Greeks: Dorian and Archaic*. Oliva's *Early Greece*, it is therefore a tribute to his scholarly nous to say that it was not entirely superseded before it was published. This is due mainly to its comprehensiveness, but also to its scholarly subtlety and clarity of exposition. It cannot in all fairness be said to be shot through with penetrating originality, but for harassed teachers and students who require a reliable guide to the main problems that may be a positive recommendation.

In Oliva, who is attached to the Leobnau Academy of Sciences and Letters at Charles University in Prague, is among the leading ancient historians in his country with an impressive list of publications stretching back over twenty-five years. He is at home in the Pantheon of the Roman Empire as he is in Hellenistic Greece. To an English-speaking readership he will perhaps be best known for his formidably learned social history of Sparta, which appeared in translation a decade ago. But his qualifications for writing the present synthesis also include a 500-page study of early Greek tyranny and a series of articles on the reformist Athenian lawgiver Solon.

The book opens with a chapter on prehistoric Greece from the Neolithic to the zenith of Bronze Age civilization. A rather crude distinction will not comment itself in the currently fashionable "indigenous" school of prehistory, and the function of the Minoan and Mycenaean palaces as redistributive centres is not fully brought out. But a fair measure of support can be expected for the traditional view that Mycenaean civilization succumbed to "barbarian" attacks from without; and it is particularly interesting to find a Czech scholar having no truck with any class-struggle theory of Mycenaean collapse.

The ensuing "Dark Age" is competently handled, though the fact that this is also the Early Iron Age in at least the more advanced parts of the Greek world is rather masked beneath the flat statement that "metal-working also made great progress". But this flaw is compensated for by a lively discussion of the origins of the Greek alphabet. This is held to be derived, not from the

Phoenician non-vocalic sign system, but from the Anatolian alphabet of North Syria which also sometimes employ signs for vowels. I would have welcomed some explicit description of the "newly found evidence" on which this attractive view is based. Also, any future treatment of the eleventh to ninth centuries BC will have to take account of recent British finds at Lefkandi on Euboea which remind us salutarily that darkness is in the eye of the beholder.

The meat of the book is contained in the remaining four chapters. In his discussion of Archaic Sparta, Oliva has adopted the most likely interpretation of such slippery matters as the alienability of land and the status of the *hektemoroi*. More culpably, perhaps, he does not specify the potentially revolutionary significance of Solon's granting the poorer Athenians access to his new Assembly and Court of Appeal (perhaps it was now that votes were first counted at Athens), and the principle of one man-one vote introduced; nor does he link the abolition of debt bondage by Solon to the growth of chattel slavery in Africa during the sixth century.

Oliva does, however, integrate the history of Athenian art with the history of Athens's political, social and economic development. This integrated approach informs his final chapter, where the rise of personal lyric poetry is connected to the evolution of the polis and the colonization movement, and freedom within the framework of the polis is rightly seen as crucial for the advances in theoretical speculation made by Greek thinkers over their oriental predecessors. In this intellectual context at least, but perhaps in this context alone, we may agree that the Persian Wars are "rightly regarded as the turning point between the archaic and the classical periods of Greek history".

questions of the relation between trade and colonization and the overall character of economic realities in Archaic Greece are balanced and valuable, though his dates for the first coinages of Corinth, Miletus and Ephesus are unacceptably high.

In his chapter on the political and social history of Athens, Oliva addresses himself to the only Archaic Greek state for whose internal evolution there is reasonably full evidence. Controversy abounds, and not all will agree that Oliva has adopted the most likely interpretation of such slippery matters as the alienability of land and the status of the *hektemoroi*. More culpably, perhaps, he does not specify the potentially revolutionary significance of Solon's granting the poorer Athenians access to his new Assembly and Court of Appeal (perhaps it was now that votes were first counted at Athens), and the principle of one man-one vote introduced; nor does he link the abolition of debt bondage by Solon to the growth of chattel slavery in Africa during the sixth century.

For let us not underestimate the size of the problem. It would be easy enough to say that the extent of our evidence for the *symposium* is due to one man. It is true that our collections of fragments of the historians, the lyric and comic poets, and even the philosophers are stuffed with quotations from that longest *symposium* of all, which took place in Rome in the early third century, and was recorded by the Greek syntactician Naxos in the Greek syntax. The *Deponaphist* is the largest single storehouse of quotations from Greek authors, and inevitably imports a symposium flavor to whole areas of Greek culture. But Athenians was not the first or the last to regard the *symposium* as the organizing principle of Greek life; and the evidence of literature and of art supports his view, as we shall see.

In the course of Greek history, like any living social form, the *symposium* underwent many transformations. What I shall do is to sketch the more important of these transformations, not as a succession of historical periods (no social phenomenon has periods in this sense), but as historical forms exhibiting certainly a development and a progression in time, but also overlapping and coexisting in such a way that it is safer to talk about functions or models rather than discrete types of human activity. I want to suggest both the interrelationships of the various symposium manifestations and the distinctiveness of the central phenomenon, which makes the *symposium* in my view a defining characteristic of Greek culture and society. In order therefore that my categories shall not be taken too seriously or my periods too chronologically, I have ordered my discourse symptomatically.

You will recall that the *symposium*, according to the best authorities, is divided into *krares* or mixing bowls: Three *krares* only do I mix for the temperate — one to health, which they empty first, the second to love and pleasure, the third to sleep. When this is drunk up wise guests go home. The fourth *krares* is ours no longer, but belongs to *hybris*; the drunken revel, the seventh to *hisk* eyes. The eighth is the policeman's, the ninth belongs to biliousness, and the tenth to madness and hurling the furniture. (Eubolus in Athenaeus 2.36)

Unlike Eubolus' feast my *symposium* is only live *krares* long, but perhaps the discussion it is intended to provide may be modelled on the remaining five, and exhibit the characteristics of drunken revel, *hisk* eyes, policemen and hurling the furniture.

My first *krares* then is for Homer. The Homeric feast is a well-known institution, but what I wish to emphasize is its importance as a structural element within Homeric society. There is no widespread evidence for a tented-type society in early Greece; nor does the Homeric world display the characteristics of a society based on kinship or clan: the virtual absence of kinship terms as part of the social organization in Homer is notorious. In this situation the attracting of support from outside the family was achieved through displays of generosity, and in particular through the use of surplus agricultural produce for the feasting and entertainment of male companions (*theoi* and *chai*). *Helios* at least are naturally not relatives by blood or marriage, but men attracted to the leader by ties which may indeed become hereditary, but which in origin are created by the reception of entertainers from their leader, and by the acceptance of guest friendship and gift-giving. Of this society the *negaroi* tell us the outward physical embodiment:

Eunaios, this must surely be the fine house of Odysseus; it would be easy to recognize and pick out even among many. There are buildings on buildings, and the court is well fenced with a wall and cornice, and the double gates are well protected; no man could force it. And I see that many men are feasting within, for the smell of fat is there, and the lyre sounds, which the gods have made as companion to the feast. (Odyssey 17.246-71)

It is the function of feasting which distinguishes the house of the aristocratic *basileus*.

Those who feast together do so on equal terms, for to create gratings is to create enemies, rather than obligations; the marks of honour are usually temporary and the result of special portions of food or extra wine, not the more formal and potentially permanent special seat. The feasting can also be reciprocal: Telemachus "feasts at equal feasts . . . for all invite him", according to Odysseus' mother (11.185-7); and Telemachus himself orders the suitors, "leave my halls and prepare other feasts, eating your own belongings, going in turn from house to house" (2.139-40). The suitors are in-

the course of Greek history, like any living social form, the *symposium* underwent many transformations. What I shall do is to sketch the more important of these transformations, not as a succession of historical periods (no social phenomenon has periods in this sense), but as historical forms exhibiting certainly a development and a progression in time, but also overlapping and coexisting in such a way that it is safer to talk about functions or models rather than discrete types of human activity. I want to suggest both the interrelationships of the various symposium manifestations and the distinctiveness of the central phenomenon, which makes the *symposium* in my view a defining characteristic of Greek culture and society. In order therefore that my categories shall not be taken too seriously or my periods too chronologically, I have ordered my discourse symptomatically.

You will recall that the *symposium*, according to the best authorities, is divided into *krares* or mixing bowls: Three *krares* only do I mix for the temperate — one to health, which they empty first, the second to love and pleasure, the third to sleep. When this is drunk up wise guests go home. The fourth *krares* is ours no longer, but belongs to *hybris*; the drunken revel, the seventh to *hisk* eyes. The eighth is the policeman's, the ninth belongs to biliousness, and the tenth to madness and hurling the furniture. (Eubolus in Athenaeus 2.36)

Unlike Eubolus' feast my *symposium* is only live *krares* long, but perhaps the discussion it is intended to provide may be modelled on the remaining five, and exhibit the characteristics of drunken revel, *hisk* eyes, policemen and hurling the furniture.

The Greek symposium in history

By Oswyn Murray

The historian, like the farmer is never satisfied with the weather. Either there is too little evidence and his theories will not grow, or there is too much, and it lies around in stagnant pools rotting the roots of his theories and causing mildew in the ears. On the whole the Greek historian is more prone to conditions of drought than flood, and he grows his crops accordingly, dry and thin on the stony ground of chronology and political history. Those who have filled the fields of Pheidon of Argos, or harvested on the Lelantine Plain, or drunk the acid vintage of the Ionian Revolt, will know what I mean. When we do come across evidence, we are prone to believe it, or deny that it is history. Such at least are thoughts provoked by considering the subject I offer for discussion.

For it is a simple if unrecognized fact that of all the Greek social institutions known to us, more evidence exists for the *symposium* than for any other; but no one has yet stopped to ask why this should be so, or tried to order this material into an account of the Greek *symposium* in history. We may contrast the work of modern historians on the one hand, and the seventeenth century or Victorian attitudes to drink. What I wish to do here is to outline the plan of a book on the *symposium*, or rather the mere part of a book, for no one person could presume to know all the material available for such a study. I am a historian, and will therefore leave on one side the study of the influence of the *symposium* on literature and on art, except for a few passing remarks.

For let us not underestimate the size of the problem. It would be easy enough to say that the extent of our evidence for the *symposium* is due to one man. It is true that our collections of fragments of the historians, the lyric and comic poets, and even the philosophers are stuffed with quotations from that longest *symposium* of all, which took place in Rome in the early third century, and was recorded by the Greek syntactician Naxos in the Greek syntax. The *Deponaphist* is the largest single storehouse of quotations from Greek authors, and inevitably imports a symposium flavor to whole areas of Greek culture. But Athenians was not the first or the last to regard the *symposium* as the organizing principle of Greek life; and the evidence of literature and of art supports his view, as we shall see.

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Unlike Eubolus' feast my *symposium* is only live *krares* long, but perhaps the discussion it is intended to provide may be modelled on the remaining five, and exhibit the characteristics of drunken revel, *hisk* eyes, policemen and hurling the furniture.

My first *krares* then is for Homer. The Homeric feast is a well-known institution, but what I wish to emphasize is its importance as a structural element within Homeric society. There is no widespread evidence for a tented-type society in early Greece; nor does the Homeric world display the characteristics of a society based on kinship or clan: the virtual absence of kinship terms as part of the social organization in Homer is notorious. In this situation the attracting of support from outside the family was achieved through displays of generosity, and in particular through the use of surplus agricultural produce for the feasting and entertainment of male companions (*theoi* and *chai*). *Helios* at least are naturally not relatives by blood or marriage, but men attracted to the leader by ties which may indeed become hereditary, but which in origin are created by the reception of entertainers from their leader, and by the acceptance of guest friendship and gift-giving. Of this society the *negaroi* tell us the outward physical embodiment:

Eunaios, this must surely be the fine house of Odysseus; it would be easy to recognize and pick out even among many. There are buildings on buildings, and the court is well fenced with a wall and cornice, and the double gates are well protected; no man could force it. And I see that many men are feasting within, for the smell of fat is there, and the lyre sounds, which the gods have made as companion to the feast. (Odyssey 17.246-71)

It is the function of feasting which distinguishes the house of the aristocratic *basileus*.

Those who feast together do so on equal terms, for to create gratings is to create enemies, rather than obligations; the marks of honour are usually temporary and the result of special portions of food or extra wine, not the more formal and potentially permanent special seat. The feasting can also be reciprocal: Telemachus "feasts at equal feasts . . . for all invite him", according to Odysseus' mother (11.185-7); and Telemachus himself orders the suitors, "leave my halls and prepare other feasts, eating your own belongings, going in turn from house to house" (2.139-40). The suitors are in-

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speech of Sappho to Glaucon (12.310-28) refers to a more permanent version of this state of affairs: the two men are honoured first "with seats of honour and full cups in Lycia", then with quasi-divine status, and finally with a *temnos*; the land is provided for the function of feasting for the people are made to say, "Our nobles that rule in Lycia are great men, they eat fat sheep and drink the best honey-sweet wine. But they are powerful men, for they light up the first of the Lycians". It is the aspect of feasting which is emphasized throughout.

Between all these elements there is a structural relationship. The production of an agricultural surplus maintains a companionship attracted by the generosity and the personal status of the leader; his style of life and even the physical layout of his dwelling (with its Great Hall and its store-rooms at the centre) reflect the need for constant renewal of the ties of loyalty. And the warrior bands are both independent of the community and also at its service.

My second *krares* is for *Euphrosyne*. Accompaniment of the feast in Homer, one of the three *Citres* in Hesiod, for the archaic period she is the embodiment of the style of life espoused by the aristocracy: for *Nemophanes* "the *krares* is mixed with *euphrosyne*", to Solon the nobles "know not how to restrain their excess or order their present *euphrosyne* in the quiet of the feast". In the late eighth century the military justification of the warrior elite began to be eroded with the evolution of new types of armour and tactics, which led (by cause or effect) to the emergence of the hoplite army organized by the polis. Aristocrats might still have their place within the phalanx or in the cavalry, and individual aristocrats became influential political leaders or even tyrants; but the class as a whole no longer possessed the same unity between style of life and political or military function. The effects of this can be seen most clearly in literary customs. Warrior burials died out with the extension of the warrior group to perhaps a third or more of the citizen body; they no longer served to distinguish the aristocrat. The warrior grave of the heroic clasp with its public funeral and posthumous cult gave way to the iconography and the furniture of the drinking party. The aristocracy of warriors had become an aristocracy of leisure, whose chief distinguishing mark remained the feast, but a feast transformed in style and meaning.

My third *krares* is for the polis. Perhaps the clearest evidence for the continuity of the aristocratic way of life from the Homeric world is found in the poetry of Alcæus:

Then he will lie in the deep-pooled sand sharing no more in the *symposia*, and the lyre or the sweet city of flames. (Alcæus, frag. 1009 Page)

From Greek Italy the literary customs spread to Etruria. The *admonition*, the *symposium* room, became the central focus of the aristocratic house: couches, tables and cushions reflected new standards of sophistication and new forms of eastern influence (Lydia, Egypt). The archaic age was the great age of sympotic pottery: potters and painters became rich and famous, producing shapes and painting designs which echoed the sympotic preoccupations of their aristocratic patrons. Entertainment became a central aspect of the occasion: archaic poetry in almost all its aspects (with the exception perhaps of some political elegy, and of religious choral text) was developed within the *symposium* — first by poets who were themselves full members of the sympotic group (Alcæus, Sappho), and later by professional sympotic poets like Anacreon. At a less sophisticated level contemporary verse, *skolia*, refrains, verse contests and other forms of verbal play abounded, whose influence persisted in later Greek poetry. There were other less intellectual pastimes, of which the game of *kottabos* is the best known. The atmosphere was male and aristocratic; women were merely slaves, dancing-girls, flute-players, an accompaniment to the wine and the song. But boys were a different matter, to be taken seriously (as Anacreon and Theognis show). It is indeed the *symposium* which, with its daytime extension the *gymnasium*, explains both the origin and the persistence of the aristocratic phenomenon of homosexuality in Greek society. In short I suggest that almost all of the most distinctive features of the high culture of archaic Greece are expressions of the sympotic way of life.

The question of diffusion is more puzzling: it is perhaps at this point of the transference of the attitudes of the aristocracy from war to leisure, that these leisure attitudes themselves became part of the attitudes of the new warrior class. The extent to which the hoplite class took on the aristocratic style is obscure. But certainly the *symposium* itself went west with men who were not initially aristocrats, though aristocrats in the Mayflower style they very soon became. Athenians are insistent on the debt of the Greek *symposium* to Sicilian style and standards of luxury: the Sicilians invented *konakos* (for instance); and by the fifth century it seems that the *symposium* was part of the social life of considerable sections of the hoplite class.

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The members for defence

By P. J. Rhodes

JACK CARGILL

The Second Athenian League
Empire or Free Alliance?
215pp, University of California Press,
1975, £17.25,
0 520 04090 4

MILTIADES B. HATZIOPOULOS and
LOUISA B. LOUKOPOULOS (Eds):
Philip of Macedon
254pp, Heppmann Educational, £21,
0 355 36340 0

The first half of the fourth century BC has become a favourite quarry-ground for young American scholars, and Cargill has devoted his attention to the Second Athenian League, in which there has been no book in English since the one with which F. H. Marshall won the Thirlwall Prize in 1905.

The history of the Second League has not been transformed by new evidence to anything like the same extent as the history of the Delian League; there are no fourteenth-century Tribute Lists. The texts of some inscriptions have been improved by S. Accame, and a little material is available now that was not available to Marshall, but the gains are not great. Jack Cargill has re-examined the most important of the inscriptions, the prospectus of the League (and publishes as his fripponpiece an unhelpfully small facsimile); he finds that in the large enunciations Accame's reconstruction owed more to imagination than to the marks on the stone; he confirms that the restoration of Coreys in the list of members is impossible and that the restoration of Jnsou (in the small enunciation) is unwarranted; otherwise he suggests only one small modification of the text in the Corpus.

As the sub-title indicates, the book is not a general history of the League (though an outline is given at the end) but an essay in interpretation. For Marshall there were sinister signs even in the first decade of the

League; and when it was no longer necessary to fight against Sparta Athens tried to convert the League into an empire, as she had converted the Delian League into an empire when it was no longer necessary to fight against Persia. Cargill believes that Athens had genuinely learned from her earlier mistakes, gave sufficient guarantees to the members of the new League, and never tried to convert it into an empire; members who defected from the League did so not because of Athenian oppression but because of their own ambitions or external pressure.

Names were added to the list of members on various occasions in the first few years of the League's existence, but never thereafter; with one exception, the sending of garrisons and Athenian officers to command them, promises which were made in the prospectus are not known to have been broken to members who appear in the list. Garrisons sometimes proved to be in the interests of the members, and it was apparently decided that they could be sent with the approval of the council of allies; provisions for the transfer of lawsuits from hills to Athens are "mere details" in the context of a generally mild settlement after revolt.

It may be true that no state joined the League, in the sense of becoming entitled to a vote in the council of allies, after the ending of additions to the published list of members, though Cargill overlooks the clear evidence that the Thracian prince Cersobleptes tried to join the League in 346; but this is to sweep the problem under the carpet rather than solve it. Cargill has to admit that the promises made in the prospectus were not kept to all who became allies of Athens, that membership of the League became a privileged form of alliance. Yet the prospectus had offered membership to all Greeks and barbarians not

Black man's burden

By Alastair Niven

CHINWEIZU, ONWUCHUKWA JEMIE and IHEHUKWU MADUBUIKE: *Toward the Decolonization of African Literature*. Enugu, Nigeria: Fourth Dimension. 321pp. £15.00. 978 156 102 5

Toward the Decolonization of African Literature is dedicated to thirty-three Third World intellectuals, "exemplary leaders against toleration of our oppressed condition": they include Amílcar Cabral, Frantz Fanon, C.L.R. James, George Padmore and Walter Rodney, who are strange but not impossible benefactors for Olufunmilola Osofisan, Marcus Garvey, René Maran, Léopold Sédar Senghor and Eric Williams. As the three authors also make clear in their introduction, "On works by members of the African diaspora our rule is clear: that one drop of black blood makes you one of us." Their declared aim is to be polemical in the hope that their robustness and gusto will "help release African culture from the death-grip of the West" and "scotch the modernist infection". The book is written with a black readership specifically in mind, and since its main task is to dismantle what the authors perceive to be Eurocentric insouciance in the approaches taken to African writing by such commentators as Gerald Moore, Charles Larson and Adrian Roscoe, I make myself a hostage to fortune in commenting upon it.

There is a practical commitment to the development of their society in most African writers which belies the popular Western image of a boozing intellectual elite driving sleek Mercedes cars: I cannot think of a significant African author who is not involved in politics, administration or education. The African writer does not, like most Western novelists, dream of tax retreats, or if he does so he does nothing to bring them to reality even when, like Chinua Achebe, he is spectacularly successful. Achebe is sometimes chided, often by Africans, because he has not written a novel since 1966. "Where are you in the struggle?" they accuse. The answer is, at the University at Nigeni, teaching, editing, administering and inspiring successive generations of students. Achebe has always argued that the writer in the developing world should be an educator and his own books are instruments to this end. I doubt if many Western novelists have this pedagogical view of their work. How many of them comment from within the society they explore rather than from above it? This is

the kind of discrepancy between Western and African cultures which concerns Chinweizu, Jemie and Madubuike in their book. I suspect that they state it with deliberate exaggeration, but a vigorous challenge to Western critical orthodoxies in book form is overdue. The fact that Madubuike was until recently Federal Minister of Education in Nigeria suggests that the implications of the book he co-authored will be well publicized.

Not that the basic argument of *Toward the Decolonization of African Literature* is original. Okot P'Bitek in *Africa's Cultural Revolution*, Ngugi wa Thiong'o in *Homecoming*, Achebe himself in *Morning Yet On Crepuscular Day* and Abiola Irele in numerous essays have been putting such points for the past decade, often with greater intellectual rigour. Theirs, however, have been miscellaneous essays usually collected in book form by European presses. It is a necessary part of Chinweizu, Jemie and Madubuike's case that their book should have an African imprimatur, for only by building up the indigenous publishing houses will African literature become truly independent. This may mean a temporary narrowing of readership, though an efficient distribution system will get round that. *Toward the Decolonization of African Literature* is handsomely presented. Clear typography, minimal proof errors, good-quality paper and attractive binding are all combined in a publication which is better produced than the average British book.

The main accusation levelled here is that European critics have attempted to annex African literature for themselves. If a book is written in English or French then it is seen as a by-product or subdivision of the Great Tradition, of Modernism or of some other beatified cultural monolith. (Chinweizu, Jemie and Madubuike are particularly rude about "structuralist prapernalia" . . . "esoteric rags, blocking understanding", "ideological experiments trying to turn gold into ash" . . . yet they hold out the hope that "A critical approach to African literature based on structuralism may yet prove to be of value".) This neo-colonial aggrandizement by the European critical hegemony (my jargon - the book is relatively free of it) would not matter if it were merely a question of Europeans making fools of themselves - as Ayi Kwei Armah, in his article "Larsony", so enjoyably showed Charles Larson doing. It matters because of the consequences in the African educational system if criticism is monopolized by people who believe that the ultimate standards are set in Cambridge. There is, for example, virtually no place

among the "isms" of modern literary criticism for the oral tradition. Chinweizu, Jemie and Madubuike insist on it as a determining factor in the written products of modern Africa - not only in obvious cases like that of Tutuola but in most of the major poets and novelists. They defend African orature against its alleged deficiencies in characterization and range of expression, and willingly expose the pretensions of European critics who half get the point and so miss it by miles - in, for example, comparing the brevity of many African novels with oral tales. The villain in question "perfunctorily dismisses the epic, which would have been the right kind of evidence, and instead focusses on the short narrative, which is the wrong kind of evidence".

Despite the assertion of black *Blurbards* in their introduction, the authors reserve much of their scorn for African critics who have come under the sway of European mentors - Willie Abraham, Sunday Azozie, Dan Iyebaye, Donatus Nwoga, Eustace Palmer, even Wole Soyinka, for his sacred cow is worshipped at their iconoclastic shrine. They effectively pick holes in these critics' logic and note errors in their facts, though they are not themselves

guiltless of misrepresentation and overstatement. Yet it is hard not to like a book which can be as spirited as this. Larson considers Achebe's description of Okonkwo inadequate in comparison with Joyce Cary's opening description of Mister Johnson. We do not find it at all inadequate for either Achebe's purpose or for our taste. We dislike the baroque excess of Cary's portrait. Such pointillism does not conform with our sense of propriety. We do not find it edifying, for example, to be shown every pore of a Brobdingnagian giant where a mere glance from afar would do. Where is Larson coming from? After he has been given a brief and succinct sketch of Okonkwo, does his dissatisfaction stem from a fear that he might not recognize him on a street or village path from fifty feet away?

Toward the Decolonization of African Literature is not a pioneer study but it articulates a point of view which is increasingly heard among African critics and which has not previously been marshalled with so much damning quotation. It restores to literary criticism a brio, verging at times on insult, which is rare in

Western criticism, where so often genteel irony or theoretical contortions are substituted for plain-spoken assertion of a fully held point of view. Also, the book is fundamentally right. It is good to read a defence of the didactic novelist or to be directed to poets who draw from an ancient but still volatile oral tradition. The entire African population has indeed, in cultural matters, "been tainted by Western debasement", as the authors claim, yet there "remains the reservoir of that African nationalism which shall bring about the end of cultural hegemony over Africa". Their book is likely to upset many African critics who are torn to shreds by name. European critics will be nervous of commenting (as I am) lest by opening their mouths they compound the sins of their forefathers, who gave birth to the hegemony. To attack *Toward the Decolonization of African Literature* will be considered impetuous; to admire it, paternalist. It conforms to what a large number of ordinary teachers of African literature, of both races, have been saying in their seminars for years, but it is good to see it written down in a manner that successfully combines academic evidence with a populist tone. This is the most vital work on African literature to appear in years.

Drawing from the eternal well

By April FitzLyon

PATRICK WADDINGTON: *Turgenev and George Sand An Improbable Entente*. 146pp. Macmillan, £12. 0 353 29147 6

The Russian historian V. V. Stasov ("the trombone of Russian art") said that Lermontov, Byron and George Sand were "the eternal well" from which Russians of his generation those who came to maturity in the late 1830s and 1840s - drew their intellectual sustenance. Some might have named Pushkin or Gogol rather than Lermontov, but few would have disagreed with him about George Sand, Belinsky, Herzen, Bakunin, Dostoevsky, Aksakov, Nekrasov, Chernyshevsky and a host of other minor figures venerated here. It seems that only Stankevich and, inevitably, Leo Tolstoy failed to succumb. Turgenev was no exception to the general rule: he came under George Sand's spell as a very young man. It has been said that his *Sportsmen's Sketches* owe something to her. He met her briefly in 1845 and then, in the late 1860s, became friendly with her in her old age, thus forming, as he so often did, a living bridge between his compatriots and the West. Much, understandably, has been published in French and Russian about this literary association; Patrick Waddington's study - a blend of comparative history and biography - is the first detailed account in English, and it highlights an important episode in the long and varied Franco-Russian cultural exchange. *Turgenev and George Sand* is scholarly, and at the same time gossipy, not too specialized for the general reader.

It is not difficult to see why George Sand's novels - essentially novels of ideas - appealed to young people in Nicholas I's Russia: the eccentricities of Tarnol censorship meant that they were freely available, yet they dealt with explosive themes. George Sand's political, social and philosophical ideas may sometimes have seemed naive, muddled and inconsistent to her Western contemporaries, but they were daring, stimulating and provocative to young Russians. It was her ideas, rather than her stories, which appealed to them, and also what they believed to be the closeness of her works to real life - something not always easy to appreciate when reading some of her novels today.

Turgenev's attitude to George Sand's works was, as always with

him, slightly ambiguous; he admired them before he began to write himself, but later became more critical, and was always wary of her ideas. Waddington traces these subtle fluctuations in great detail, and has some intriguing things to say about them. He draws attention to certain passages in Turgenev's works which appear to be specific examples of borrowings - almost certainly unconscious - from the older writer. But probably George Sand's most important contribution to the formation of Turgenev and other Russian writers was her revelation of the novel form as a vehicle for social, political and philosophical ideas. Neither Turgenev nor, for that matter, Dostoevsky, who so much admired her, shared her ideas, which were mainly taken up by social reformers; but she made them realize the power of the novel, and they used it to full advantage.

Turgenev's personal relations with George Sand stemmed from, and were complicated by, his involvement with the Spanish singer Pauline Viardot. George was the close friend and mentor of Pauline, who was in part the incarnation of George's ideal of the dedicated artist - a Saint-Simonite theme which she elaborates in several novels - and who was in part formed by George to comply with that ideal. The young Pauline Garcia's marriage to the much older Louis Viardot was engineered by George in order to preserve Pauline from the stresses and strains of any more passionate involvement which, George believed, would deflect her from her mission to serve humanity through art. Turgenev first met George Sand briefly at the Viardots' house in 1845 (when his love for Pauline was relatively new, and still based on hope); since nothing is known about this encounter, whatever Waddington or anyone else writes about it is pure speculation. But it is, perhaps, significant that neither Turgenev nor George Sand recorded anything about this first meeting, and that they did not meet again for another twenty-three years, although it would have been very easy for them to do so. In 1845 George probably saw Turgenev as a threat to Pauline, whereas Turgenev may have seen George as a threat to his happiness.

When they did meet again, brought together by Flaubert in 1868, Turgenev had long since arrived in a *modus vivendi* with the Viardots; he was middle-aged, and George was old. They formed a warm, but not very intimate, autumnal friendship. The praise of each other's works at this point must be interpreted as the light of that friendship. In reality, Turgenev had

by then far outstripped his teacher and, despite George's generous praise of his works, one still feels some lack of understanding on her part. Waddington describes these nuances in the two writers' attitudes to each other's works, and their personal admiration and affection, in great detail and with the aid of hitherto unpublished material.

Waddington is only concerned with literary influences, and rightly so. Turgenev was not the channel through which George Sand's social and political ideas influenced Russian radical thought. By the late nineteenth century most Russians who had admired her in their youth, and who had assimilated and used many of her ideas, had lost interest in her novels. Native Russian novels - those of Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and others - had carried the novel into a new phase of development, and made George Sand's novels seem very old-fashioned. But she was still revered as the "young female Titan" (Stasov's phrase, which she had once been, and she is still much admired in the Soviet Union today).

Mirsky considered that Gogol and George Sand were "the father and mother of Russian realism"; but George remained a Romantic to the end, and understood the word "realism" in the late nineteenth-century French sense. Probably she would not have appreciated Mirsky's compliment. She took Flaubert's "school" to task for not being sufficiently interested in fundamental things, for remaining too much on the surface. And to Turgenev she wrote perspicaciously: "You are said to be a realist - which isn't true, since above all you are a great poet; but if your portraits do belong to realism, I am very much in favour of that school as understood by you." She would certainly not have been in favour of Russian realism as understood by, say, Chernyshevsky, or of Socialist Realism, which claims that as a great-grandmother. But then, who really has much in common with their great-grandchildren?

Volume 2 in the University of California Press's series of "Documentary Studies in Modern Russian Poetry" is *A Difficult Shilling: Zimelda Glupitsa*, a memoir of the poet written by her secretary and factotum Vladimir Zlobin (197pp. £12.50, 0 520 03867 3). The book, which is edited, annotated and with an introduction by Simon Karlinsky, is an account of the life and work of Glupitsa (1869-1945), one of the initiators of the Russian poetic Renaissance at the end of the nineteenth century and a guiding light of the Symbolist movement.

commentary

War and the educated girl

By Patricia Craig

Angels of War
Half Moon Old Theatre

"Mrs. Worthington's Daughters" (founded in 1978) is a stage company devoted to the revival of interesting works by female dramatists, or plays from the past which satisfy the requirements of current feminist ethics. *Angels of War* is an appropriate choice on such counts: written in 1935 by Muriel Box (then a community girl at Gainsborough Studios in London), it deals freely and forthrightly with the tribulations of women ambulance drivers at the front in 1918.

Neither the subject nor the method of treatment was new, of course, even in 1935. Vera Brittain had noted the failure of reputable novelists to give adequate acknowledgement to the extent of women's involvement in the war effort, and attempted to make good the deficiency in her own novels of the 1930s; she also recorded her experiences in France in her autobiographical *Tessament of Youth* (1933). *Angels of War* will probably remind viewers of this, because of the recent television adaptation, but actually it bears a stronger resemblance to a popular novel of 1932, *Not So Quiet* by "Helen Zenna Smith" (Eveline Price). The play is more succinct and less lurid, fortunately, but it follows the book quite closely in outline and in tone, showing a similar contempt for cant and admiration for candour.

In another novel of the period, Pamela Hinkson's *The Ladies Road* (1932), we find the typical passionate skit-furmet dreaming of active service: "Would she ever get to France . . . drive an ambulance near the line?" For those who did get there, the commonest experience was the loss of illusion. *Angels of War* opens with the arrival of an eager recruit -

"simply dying to get out here" - whose ardour is greeted with tired asperity and cynicism by the old hands. "War's awful - bloody awful", the phlegmatic Northcote "Cocky" (Gertrude Griffiths) states flatly, prompting the cocky newcomer to ask if all the girls use bad language "like you do".

Needless to say, the de-education of Eileen (Peta Masters) is effected rapidly: soon she is smoking and swearing with the rest of them. The first act ends with the ex-greenhorn, now thoroughly toughened and abused, arriving back from an illicit outing in a dramatic state of drunkenness. What's worse than this is incipient meanness: Edna (called "Nobby" because of her accent) begins to appropriate more than her fair share of cocoa. However, "You were a decent enough kid when you came here", she is told severely; and decency reasserts itself in the end, though it has rather a lot to contend with. Physical discomfort ("cold, guns, lice, and that blasted whistle") is not the only hardship. Antipathies and animosities flourish in the over-charged atmosphere.

Among the girls are four Jo, whose comic glumness soon turns to bawling and bullying (though she's good at heart, as they all are); a weakling who's prone to funk and hysteria, but goes on doing her bit; and steadfast Vic, the most sympathetically presented of the lot, who takes the first blow - the death of a fiancé - almost as stoically as that common figure in patriotic literature, the well-bred lady who opens a fête or a concert with a faint telegram clutched in her hand. There is also a flirt (well played by Maggie Wilkinson) who specializes in getting off with officers. Instead of telling us a story of incidents, all of them more or less illustrative of contemporary attitudes to the war and beliefs about the lessons to be derived from it. Behind every set-piece is a cliché - "War enlarges the horizon for the educated girl"; "Britain's brave

daughters"; "keeping the flag flying"; and so on - which is neatly repudiated. *Angels of War* contains a few clichés of its own, though the unlikely commandant on whom authority sits like a mortar-board on hulloing teachers is one of these.

Muriel Box has simplified everything, too, in order to obtain the most immediately striking effects from her material. One driver is killed offstage (swiped out by a piece of shrapnel like a prominent character in Evelyn Price's novel) and her death causes predictable reactions (very noisily staged). Two girls are about to be dismissed from the service - one unjustly; tension in the sleeping quarters has been succeeded by a huddle attempt on everyone's part to save the bacon of someone else - as news of the Armistice comes through. In the last scene, the girls are surprised to find themselves viewing the prospect of demobilization with less relish than they had expected. Belatedly, they recognize the "sense of purpose" that kept them going through all their vicissitudes. In their talk, they anticipate the theme of another novel by Evelyn Price (a sequel to *Not So Quiet* . . . which is the first part of a trilogy): "Whatever happens, I think we're going to find it difficult to settle to the quiet life." And was the cost in human lives, in cherished delusions and peace of mind worthwhile? Only if, as people believed in 1918 but not in 1935, the war really had put an end to the possibility of war in the future. This is the bleak note on which the play ends.

Angels of War ends its run at the Half Moon Old Theatre on November 7. It goes to Kingsway Polytechnic on the 8th, Redbridge Drama Centre, E18 (11th), Battersea Arts Centre (12th and 13th), Clat's Palace, Brooksbys Walk, E9 (14th). Further details of the tour, which continues until December 7, are obtainable from Arts Admin, Unit 366, 27 Clerkenwell Close, EC1, Tel. 250 1474.

Sober abandon

By Richard Osborne

Die Walküre, Act 1
Royal Festival Hall

Many years ago Shaw furnished his readers with the "theatrical particulars" of a Hans Richter concert which included Beethoven's Eighth Symphony, Berlioz's Overture *King Lear*, the Tannhäuser Overture and Bacharach, Act 1 of *Die Walküre* from the exit of Hunding, and "by way of liqueur" the Ride of the Valkyries. Such lavish fare was not an offer from Klaus Tennstedt and the London Philharmonic Orchestra, though we were obliged to sit through the burlesque pomp of the *Meistersinger* Overture and the equally burlesque *Madama Butterfly* (which I did not see). The evening's principal glory was the evening's principal offering, Forest marmos, however beautifully played, are an inappropriate preparation for the plunge into the storm-tossed *Unravel of Die Walküre*, whose prologue is *Das Rheingold* or nothing at all.

The whole programme was vitiated by several subtle acts of discontinuity: flaws less palpable, perhaps, than Richter's reckless musical gormandizing, but divisive nonetheless. The evening's principal glory was the evening's principal offering, Forest marmos, however beautifully played, are an inappropriate preparation for the plunge into the storm-tossed *Unravel of Die Walküre*, whose prologue is *Das Rheingold* or nothing at all.

seemed too much preoccupied with the orchestra. Here was an inexperienced Sigmund, Robert Schunk, round abandoned about by Wotan and his conductor. Note for note, Tennstedt's accompanying is so punctilious as the next man's, and when orchestra and soloist rapturously paused at the great cry "Wälse! Wälse!" there was a brief sense of all-fanfolding splendour. Too often, though, vocal and orchestra parts seemed merely to coincide, like chance acquaintances gratefully concurring in a report on events: a memorandum made up of so many staccato jottings. (Sborn of a proper vocal legato how comical Wagner's alliterative verse occasionally sounds.) Marius Rintzler, the Hunding, is the more experienced artist and he coped better with the formidable task of imitating his role in Tennstedt's self-referential style.

If we are to judge by the calls at the end - conductor, cast and orchestra turned reverentially towards Jessye Norman - the evening was clearly intended for her. As Sieglinde she is not, of course, physically credible; nor, without a black Sigmund, can we at all adequately engage the crucially thrilling fact that the lovers are brother and sister. By presenting Miss Norman as the high priestess of the evening, divisions were further heightened: a Sieglinde, resplendent in black and gold, scoreless and acting out parts of the drama, alongside two score-bound functionaries soberly attired in evening dress.

There is an idea around that here at last is the great Wagner soprano

of the next decade. In the summer in Tanglewood, Miss Norman sang Act 2 of *Tristan* with Vickers and Ozawa, an experience which according to her own report was "interesting", "an experiment worth carrying on with"; remarks which, decoded, suggest that she was not entirely happy with the experiment. No one doubts that her voice has a certain alken allure, but yet settled in the lowest reaches which hold out promise of rich mezzo colourings, it remains effortlessly smooth in the middle and top registers. It is not, however, a big voice. Once or twice in this performance the orchestra rode over her in a way that a Flagstad or a Nilsson would never have countenanced. Predictably, Norman was at her best in a limpidly delivered "Du bist der Lenz". Elsewhere, above all in the crucial monologue "Der Männer Sippe", there was too little light and shade in the reading. One doesn't have to go back to Lotte Lehmann (with whom Norman once discussed the role) to find gradations of mood which in Norman's performance merely grudgingly coalesced: the attack on "Der Männer Sippe" itself, the sense of love-longing at the mention of the stranger, a heroic note at "doch des andren Strahl", the sense of girlish excitement in the narrative of the sword in the ash tree.

Vocally, Norman is closer to Janowitz than Nilsson and would be best served by the chivalric sheen, the chamber-music intimacy and fire-drawn lines of Karajan's Wagner. Certainly, it is difficult to imagine Karajan for Solti who presents a performance (allowing a singer of Miss Norman's talents to give a reading of the role as essentially arbitrary and unintegrated as this.

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